

FIVE
DISCOURSES
On so many
Very Important POINTS
OF
Practical Religion.

To which are added
FOUR SERMONS,
Publish'd by the Author in his Life-time.

The Second Edition.

By JOHN KETTLEWELL, late a
Minister of the Church of *England*.

With a PREFACE, wherein the
Author's Character is attempted.

L O N D O N;
Printed for A. and J. Churchill, at the Black
Swan in Pater-Noster-Row, 1708.

RIVER
DISCOURSES

ON TO MANY
Very Important Points
OF
Practical Religion



THE
JOHN X. TAYLOR
Minister of the Gospel
WITH A PREFACE BY
JOHN X. TAYLOR
LONDON
Printed by J. G. & Co. 1840

THE
PREFACE.

THE following *Sermons* are all that the *Reverend Author* left finish'd for the Press; those which had not his last Hand, were by his particular Order forbid to be Printed; so that the Reader may be assur'd, that as he is not impos'd upon by imperfect Copies, made entire by the care and diligence of Friends; so neither must he expect any other Remains of this kind, than those which are now offer'd to his charitable perusal.

The Preface.

And if *Discourses*, compos'd upon the weightiest Subjects, handled with great *Clearness*, and strength of *Judgment*, animated with a true *Spirit of Piety*, stood in need of any Recommendation, the Name of the *Worthy Mr. Kettlewell* might go far to procure them a favourable reception: For such was the Lustre of his *Eminent Sanctity*, that all Parties paid a due Veneration to his Character; and how wide soever they differ'd in other Matters, they own'd the Perfection of his Christian Morals: Indeed, his great *Piety*, *useful Learning*, and *solid Judgment*, rendred him a *publick Blessing*, and a peculiar Ornament of the Church and Age wherein he liv'd; and the wise Improvement he made of such *valuable Talents*, will cause his Light to shine bright to *Posterity*, and future Generations shall call him *Blessed*.

The Preface.

V

It must be confess'd, that he has given the World a perfect Image of his own Mind in his admirable Writings, the durable Monuments of his true Worth : But because 'tis much easier to prescribe wise Rules for the Conduct of others, than to make use of them in the government of our own Lives ; and that to act reasonably, is of greater value than to write well : I have good grounds to hope, that a very skilful and masterly Hand will set this Pattern of *Primitive Christianity* in its true Light, and convey him down to Posterity in his full proportion, that the World may know how carefully he practised those Duties he preach'd to others, and how he confirm'd his Doctrines by the powerful Attractive of a suitable Example, which will make his Name to live, and be mention'd with Re-

A 3

verence

verence in the Records of Church-History.

I know his great Modesty thought the Day of Judgment soon enough to lay open the several Particularities of his Life ; *Where every Work shall be made manifest, whether it be good, or whether it be evil :* And all his Care was, how to stand before the impartial Scrutiny of that Dreadful Tribunal. Yet, as a Work of this nature, may be a just Tribute to the Memory of one so truly Great, if *Wisdom and Piety, Learning and Vertue*, and a large *beneficent Mind*, may be allow'd to constitute the Character ; so, moreover, it may prove very advantageous to Christians in general, especially to those who have the great Honour to attend at the Altar, and are dedicated to the more immediate Service of God, by furnishing them with so compleat a Model

del for their Direction ; Examples being allow'd to have a mighty Force in forming us to a right Temper of Mind, by a lively Representation in practice of the Possibility and Easiness of those Precepts which are so agreeable to our best Reason, and which our Holy Religion requires of us.

Now the Example of this *Faithful Servant of God* was fitted for Universal Imitation, we find no Affectations of Singularity in indifferent Things, no Stress laid upon some particular Duties to the prejudice and neglect of others ; but *he had a respect to all God's Commands* ; his Life was of a piece, and he distinguish'd himself by nothing so much as solid and substantial Piety ; his Conversation shew'd forth a profound Humility, and an admirable Meekness of Spirit, and Sweetness of Disposition ; an un-

spotted Integrity, and a blameless Sincerity ; an Universal Charity, and a particular Concern for the Necessities of the Poor ; a great Tenderness for the Afflicted, and an extreme Desire to do Good to all the World : There was remarkable in Him, a great Love of Devotion ; an entire Submission to the Will of God, and a true Contempt of the World, by not suffering it to allure or affright Him from his Duty ; a mighty Patience under all Afflictions, and so perfect an Abhorrence of all Sin, that he started even at the very Appearance of it ; the Flame of prudent Zeal burnt bright in his Mind ; and as nothing gave him a greater Concern, than the hazard Men expose themselves to, by the neglect of their Eternal Salvation, so his chief Sollicitude and Care was always to search and contrive
Means

Means to prevent their Everlasting Ruin; and his Thoughts were employ'd how to rescue Souls from those Snares which are laid for them by the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

Tho' his *Intellectual Faculties*, improv'd by the Advantages of a Learned Education, might place him in the first Rank of considerable Men; yet what he valued more in others, and upon which account he was really more valuable himself, were his *Moral Accomplishments*, his Pious Temper, and Disposition of Mind, his true Christian Spirit: For *Learning*, and *Great Parts*, separated from *Meekness* and *Humility*, are like a dangerous Weapon in the Hands of a Mad-man, who uses it indifferently against himself and others; and the Compiler of his Life will have no great difficulty to find variety
of

The Preface.

of Instances to justify this part of his Character ; for he *show'd out of a good Conversation his Works with Meekness of Wisdom.*

I cannot forbear upon this Occasion to mention his *Controversial Writings*, which bear evidence in this Case, and are a genuine Proof of what was so very commendable in him ; He never treats his Adversaries with ill Language, Scorn or Contempt, nor with personal Reflections, or injurious Surmises ; nor because he thought they err'd in one Point, did he ever endeavour to make them Guilty of all ; nor does he consecrate any unchristian Heat under a pretence of defending Truth ; a dangerous Rock whereupon many Learned, and otherways Good Men, have fatally split ; as if while a Zeal was express'd in Matters of Belief, the weighty
Matters

Matters of Practice might be neglected; and if while we shew our selves warmly concern'd for God's Honour, we were exempted from all Christian Rules in the Prosecution of it: *but the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God*; it being a very irregular Method to defend his Cause, by the breach of many of his Precepts, and as improper to expect to convince a Man's Reason, when we provoke his Indignation by any uncivil Treatment. The Suggestions of a Heathen in this Particular are very pertinent, who advises, *To give way to Falshood with Mildness.* Whereby as his Commentator, Hierocles affirms, *He doth not mean we should embrace it, but only give it a patient Hearing, and not to count it a strange thing, if Men fall off sometimes from Truth.* And that excellent Moralist, a little before admonishes

Ψδδδς
δ'νν πῆς ἡ
λέγεται
πρὸς τὴν
Pythao.
Carm.

ΜΗΤΕ σφο-
δρῶς μΗΤΕ
ὕβριστικῶς.
Hier. p.
145.

monishes those who are able to de-
stroy Errour, not to do it vehemently
nor insolently.

Tom. 2.
p. 80.

De fin.
Bon. &
Mal. lib. 1.

Moreover Plutarch, that great Ornament of Moral, as well as Historical Learning, makes the way of managing a Discourse with modesty and mildness of Temper, neither suffering our selves to engage with Vehemency and Passion, nor to be hot and concern'd in urging an Argument, nor to rail and give bad Words, even tho' we are non-plus'd, to be a true sign of a great Proficient in Vertue. And the celebrated Roman Orator, gives it as his Opinion, That Disputes, accompanied with Reproaches, and opprobrious Language, with Passion, and obstinate Contention, are unworthy of that Man that makes Profession of Philosophy.

I am sure the Precepts of our Blessed Saviour are full to that Purpose, *Quæ cum legimus quem Philosophum*

Isophum non contemnimus? And that perfect Model of Piety hath set an Example of great *Meekness*, in instructing those that oppos'd themselves; and exercis'd an abundance of Patience, in bearing with the Infirmities of Men; and, above all, recommends the Pattern of his *Meekness*, as the surest method of acquiring a Likeness to him; to which Purpose he was pleas'd to be represented by a *Lamb*; and the Spirit that taught Christianity came down in the shape of a *Dove*.

How *charitable* and *beneficent* a *Mind* he had, appear'd in the whole Course of his Life, which was spent in prosecuting the noblest Ends of making others Happy; either by his Pious Conversation, or Charitable Offices; by his Judicious Writings, or Profitable Sermons, which were always adapted
to

to the Necessities of his Flock, and gave warning of those Dangers which threatned them: He was ready upon all Occasions to supply the Wants of the Poor according to his Abilities; and the Assistance he gave the Sick in his Parish by some Skill he had that way, was made use of as a favourable Opportunity to instill his heavenly Instructions, and serv'd as a Vehicle to convey Nourishment to their precious Souls. Nothing could set bounds to his large Mind, but that Period which will set bounds to all things; for his Inclinations of doing good were particularly conspicuous at his Death, in that considerable Settlement he made for ever upon the Poor of the Parish where he was born in *Yorkshire*. The Reader will allow me to call it Considerable, when he shall know, that Five and twenty Pounds

Pounds yearly Revenue, which he Dedicated to that purpose, was near half of his Estate; the remainder was allotted to the Assistance of those Relations, whose Circumstances most requir'd his Help: But since God had not Blessed him with Children, he gladly adopted the poor Members of Christ, as Heirs to his paternal Inheritance; and instead of entertaining the least repining Thought for want of Issue, he thank'd God for the opportunity that was put into his Hands, of testifying his Love and Devotion towards him.

And I believe there never was a Settlement of that kind made with greater Piety and Prudence; the Qualifications of those who are to receive benefit by it, are strict Obligations to the Vertues of a Christian Life; he has laid down
such

such Rules for the managing of it, as in humane Probability may attain their End; and has provided for all those Difficulties which might threaten to render it ineffectual; which was all the Labour of his own Brain, and receiv'd only its Form from the skilful in the Law; 'tis possible the World may see the whole at length, since it may serve to direct those whose hearts God shall touch with such charitable Dispositions.

Thus while the World lasts he will be clothing the Naked, feeding the Hungry, visiting the Sick, (having made a yearly Allowance for their Necessities) instructing the Ignorant, and powerfully persuading the Poor to apply themselves to the Service of God, by making it the means of their support to obey him. Happy Soul! Thy Joy of doing Good will be
still

still encreasing by the Blessed Fruit thy Zeal will bring forth, even after thy Death; and if in this Life, where we see through a Glass darkly, and where our best Services are allay'd with the Infirmities of our frail Nature, a Good Man often thinks no Pleasure comparable to that of Glorifying God; what an unconceivable Happiness must it be in the next Life, where all the Excellencies of the Divine Being shall be clearly discover'd, and where Love is pure without the least mixture, and inflam'd to its utmost Capacity; to find that he still glorifies him whom he Loves, and continues to make him yet loved by others?

And this his *Charitable Temper* appear'd not only in his *Actions*, but also in his *Discourse*, which was govern'd by favourable Interpretations

tations of what others either did or said; and where things were apprehended by him, so apparently wicked and unrighteous, that they would not admit of his Candor, there he shew'd his Charity in judging favourably of those Dispositions of Mind wherewith they were done, ascribing them, if he could lay hold of any Colour and Pretence, to the most excusable Principles.

He excell'd in all the *suffering Vertues*, which are the *peculiar Beauties* of *Christianity*, and which the Wise and Good Providence of God, call'd upon him to exercise; as *Patience*, *Meekness*, *Trust in God*, *dependance upon him for Succour*, *Self-denial*, *cheerfully taking up the Cross*, *forgiving Injuries*, and *doing good to those that despitefully used him*; and had he always liv'd in a Calm,
we

we could not have form'd so just an Idea of his Worth; for we must be in a suffering State, and expos'd to the weight of many and great Afflictions, before we can be assur'd how patiently and contentedly, how cheerfully and courageously we can undergo them; and agreeable to this 'tis remarkable, that *Plato*, to finish his Character of a Righteous Man, makes him pass through a Scene of Sufferings to justify the Principle of his Vertue; fleeting Pains of this short Life well recompenced with everlasting Joys!

His Conduct in the Work of the Ministry sufficiently evidenc'd to the World, how truly he answer'd that important Demand in Ordination; *Whether he trusted he was inwardly mov'd by the Holy Ghost to take upon him that Office and Ministration?*

The Preface.

The constant Application of his Time and Pains to the discharge of his *Pastoral Duties*; the great Neglect he always shew'd in soliciting Preferments, and his readiness and chearfulness in parting with that Station he was plac'd in, when he apprehended the keeping of it inconsistent with the peace of his Mind, is a clear proof that the only design he aim'd at by engaging in the *Sacred Function*, was the Service of his Blessed Master, and the Salvation of the Souls of Men; and that he espous'd his Profession as a happy Instrument of doing Good, rather than of being Rich and Great.

The last Scene of his Life, his *Sickness* and *Death* still maintain'd the Character of strict Piety and Christian Devotion; and when I shall

The Preface.

XXI

shall tell the Reader that his admirable Book of *Death made Comfortable*, the last Efforts of his Charity for the Salvation of his Brethren, was the Subject-matter of his own Practice, and the constant Exercise of his devout Mind under that tedious and lingering Sickness, which put a Period to his Days; He may be satisfied, that *he died the Death of the Righteous, and that his latter End was like his.*

'Tis true, *Good Men* always die well, because qualified for that happy State upon which they enter; tho' the Circumstances of their Death be never so sudden, and tho' the Nature of their Disease deprives us of their Edifying Example in the Exercise of Death-bed Vertues; yet when God gives Time, and the Advantage of an undisturb'd Understanding, the Pi-

ous Soul is careful to make use of such Blessings, for the securing a *happy Eternity*.

In order to this purpose, our *dying Saint*, whose Lamp was never without Oil, thought his Sickness a proper Season to trim it, and to provide for the Bridegroom's coming; he prudently settled all his Temporal Affairs, and after his large *Legacy* for *Charitable Uses*, he acknowledg'd the Kindness of his particular Friends by some grateful Remembrances, and rewarded the Services of his Inferiors by decent Gratuities.

As to the *Concerns* of his *Soul*, he carefully reflected upon all the Actions of his past Life; diligently examin'd his Writings, whether they afforded any Matter for Repentance, (a Practice highly necessary to be imitated, by those who

who have been engag'd in Controversy;) he heartily bewail'd all his Miscarriages, and made those Solemn Professions of his Faith, which the Church requires, and which have a great Tendency to strengthen and confirm those that survive: He freely forgave all the World, and was ready and willing to make Compensation for any Wrong that could be charg'd upon him; he daily joyn'd in the Publick Prayers of the Church, and frequently receiv'd the Blessed Sacrament, once as the *Viaticum* of a dying Christian, with the benefit of Absolution from an *Eminent Bishop* of our Church; the Remnant of his Strength he manag'd for the Exercise of his Private Devotions, upon which account he excus'd himself from receiving the frequent Visits that would have

a 4 been

been made him by many of his Acquaintance: He bore his languishing Condition without the least shadow of Discontent; and tho' his Mind was eagerly bent upon Heaven, he never betray'd the least Desire for the Removal of his Pains, till God's appointed time should come; and was willing to bear yet longer those Pressures under which he lay, if God thought fit to continue them, even tho' they delay'd that Happiness he so earnestly desir'd, and so comfortably expected; which answers S. *Augustin's* Character of a Good Christian, *Qui patienter vivit, & delectabiliter moritur.*

No Words can furnish us with a clearer Idea of his true Christian firmness of Mind, than those which fell from his own Mouth upon the immediate approach of Death, when

The Preface.

XXV

when he express'd himself in this manner : I am entring upon my last Labour ; the Lord gave, and he is now taking away ; blessed be the Name of the Lord : For I thank my God, I am going without any distrust, without the least misgiving, to a place of Rest and Joy, and everlasting Bliss ; there is no Life like to a happy Death. I have endeavour'd, even from my Youth, to approve my self a Faithful Servant to my Great Master : I have taken some pains in Writing several Books ; I have seriously consider'd them, and am fully satisfy'd (looking on those about him) that you may find in them the way to Heaven ; the Christian Duties contain'd therein have been my practice as well as study, and now I find the advantage of it ; and therefore be careful to read them often and seriously, and live suitably thereunto, that when you come to the Condition I am now in,
you

you may die with comfort, as you see me do: I have some little pain indeed, but my pain is nothing so extraordinary as my hopes; for I have earnestly repented of all my Sins, and verily believe, that through the tender Mercies of my God, and Merits of my Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, I shall be carried up into Abraham's Bosom.

After which he made this short Prayer.

I wait, O God, for that everlasting Rest which I want at present, but shall not long; I am ready when thou, my God, call'st for me, yet can stay with patience till thou pleasest, for thy time is the best time, and thy pleasure the best pleasure.

Such a careful and wise provision had he made for his last Hours, as to be able to look Death
in

in the face; not only without Amazement, but even with a great Degree of Joy and Consolation.

In short, he was *Léarned* without *Pride*; *Wise* and *Judicious* without *Cunning*; he served at the *Altar* without either *Covetousness* or *Ambition*; he was *Devout* without *Affectation*, sincerely *Religious* without *Moroseness*, *Courteous* and *Affable* without *Flattery* or mean *Compliances*; *Just* without *Rigour*, *Charitable* without *Vanity*, and heartily *zealous* for the *Interest* of *Religion* without *Faction*. May we who survive imitate the Pattern of his *Piety*, that we may attain that *Happiness* which he now possesses as the *Reward* of it; and in *Consort* with him and all those *Blessed Souls* who have departed this *Life* in the *Faith* and *Fear* of *God*,
sing

sing Allelujahs to the *King of Saints,*
Salvation and Glory, Honour and Power
to Him that sitteth on the Throne; God
the Father, God the Son, and God the
Holy Ghost. Amen.

14 Dec. 1695.
Blackheath.

Rob. Nelson.

THE

THE
CONTENTS.

DISCOURSE I.

Stating the Notion of Christian Salvation, and shewing it chiefly to consist in a Deliverance from our Sins, Page 1

On Matth. i. 21. *Thou shalt call his Name Jesus; for he shall save his People from their Sins.*

DISCOURSE II.

Shewing that this Deliverance, and entire Obedience, is neither Impossible, nor extreme Difficult, if sincere Christians set about it as they ought, p. 35

On Philip. 4. 13. *I can do all things thro' Christ which strengtheneth me.*

DIS-

The CONTENTS.

DISCOURSE III.

How to form such a Purpose of sincere Repentance, and intire Obedience, as will be effectual for this Purpose, p. 77

On Acts 11. 23. *And exhorted them all, that with purpose of Heart, they would cleave unto the Lord.*

DISCOURSE IV.

How to take the truest Wisdom of worldly Men in their Managements, and apply them with admirable Use and Advantage in the Improvement, and Perfection of Holy Obedience, p. 103

On Luk. 16. 8. *For the Children of this World are wiser in their Generation, than the Children of Light.*

DISCOURSE V.

About the Return of Prayers ; or when we may, when we may not Promise our selves the particular Things we ask for, p. 143

On Matth. 7. 7, 8. *Ask and it shall be given you, for every one that asketh receiveth.*

DIS.

The CONTENTS.

DISCOURSE VI.

Explaining the Nature of Edification,
both of Particular Persons in Private
Graces, and of the Church in Unity
and Peace, being a Visitation-Ser-
mon

On 1 Cor. 14. 12. — *Seek that ye may ^{abound}
excel to the edifying of the Church.* p. 1 (*in spiritual
Gifts*)

DISCOURSE VII.

Being a Sermon preach'd at the Funeral
of the Honourable the Lady Digby,

On Prov. 14. 32. — *But the Righteous
hath Hope in his Death.* p. 81

DISCOURSE VIII.

Being a Sermon preach'd on Occasion
of the Death of the Right Honour-
able the Lord Digby,

On Heb. 6. 12. *That ye be not slothful,
but followers of them, who through Faith
and Patience inherit the Promises.* p. 121

DIS-

The CONTENTS.

DISCOURSE IX.

A Sermon intituled *The Religious Loyalist*,
or a Good Christian taught how to
be a Faithful Servant both to God
and the King,

On Matth. 22. 21. *Render therefore unto
Cesar, the things which are Cesar's;
and unto God, the things which are
God's.*

P. 173

DISCOURSE I.

Stating the Notion of the Christian Salvation, and shewing it chiefly to consist in a Deliverance from our Sins.

On Matt. 1. 21. Thou shalt call his Name Jesus: For he shall save his People from their sins.

SINCE all Men, who make any Pretence to Sobriety and Religion, profess themselves most earnestly desirous of Salvation; and the great Errand of our blessed Lord into the World was to purchase it, and make a tender of it to them; it may well seem strange to us, as once it did to the Apostles, that yet for all this, *there are but few who shall be saved.* For the far greater number of the Christian World, are impenitently wicked;

B

they

they live all their days in a course of Sin, and die without amendment; and such Men the Scripture assures us, in the last Judgment will not be forgiven: so, that notwithstanding all the noise that is made about Salvation, the greatest part have very little, or no share in it; it is but seldom found, tho' it be often talked of, and the generality of Men seem to be as far from it, as if the Gospel had never come abroad to bring them to it.

Now one chief Reason, why so many Men do at last miss of Salvation, after they have put forth such eager Desires, and spent such zealous Pains upon it, is because they mistake its Nature, and understand not truly wherein it doth consist. They take it to be something else than what it is, and so are apt usually to hope well of it, and, to think they have attained to it, when as, alas! they are yet in a lost state, and at a very great distance from it; for altho' that Salvation which Christ dearly purchased, and which the Gospel comes to promote in us, be a Salvation from sin, as we shall see presently; yet that which Men ordinarily talk of, and expect by him is nothing less. They think to be pardon'd without Obedience, and to be
saved

saved from Punishment, whilst they persevere in the Practice of their Sins. For if we come to the most profligate Sinner, altho' it be upon his Death-bed, when he is going out of the World with all his Sins, and unmortified Lusts about him; yet even he, who is thus lost in sin, will still talk of his Saviour Christ, and hopes to be saved by him notwithstanding.

To prevent or redress such dangerous mistakes in a matter of so high moment, I intend in discoursing upon these words,

First, To represent to you what that Salvation is, which Christ has purchased for us. And,

Secondly, To note some particular Uses and Improvements of it.

First, I shall represent to you what that Salvation is, which Christ has purchas'd for us.

To *save*, is, to deliver from evil and danger; and may be extended to as many Evils, as Men may be deliver'd from.

Thus every where in *David's Psalms*, the Deliverance of the righteous out of afflictions and troubles, is called * his * Psal. 37. 37. Act. 27. 31. Salvation; and *Gideon* is said to have *sa-* 2 King. 13. ved^s.

Christian Salvation,

ved Israel when he rescued them out of the hands of the Midianites, Judg. 6. 14.

Now as for those Evils which Christ came to save us from, in our Deliverance from which consists our Christian Salvation, they are not the temporal Evils and Afflictions of this Life. *His Kingdom was not of this World*; nor is his Protection always from the Evils of it; *he himself was a Man of sorrows*, and his Church must expect to be like him, and to live under Persecutions. But they are,

First, Our sins; and consequent upon them,

Secondly, Those eternal Punishments, which are due unto us for them. Upon these accounts it is, that he is *Christ the Saviour*; *he shall be called Jesus*, or a Saviour; saith the Angel, *because he shall save his People from their sins.*

As for the latter of these, *viz. the Deliverance from eternal Death, and Hell-torments*, which are the Punishment that is due unto our Sins; this Christ has undoubtedly purchased for all those that are his. *There remains no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; faith

a Deliverance from Sin.

3

saith the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 1.* but *they are passed over from death unto life, Joh. 5. 24.* God who should in anger exact those Punishments, is *reconciled to them by the death of his Son, Rom. 5. 10.* so that now they are no longer under his severity as an offended Lord, but can look upon him as their Protector, and Patron, having *received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they can call him Abba, i. e. Father, Rom. 8. 15.*

And as for this Deliverance, from the Worm of Conscience, and Pangs of Soul, from the eternal Pains of Hell, and the Horrors of Darknes, we are generally apt to think it a Deliverance indeed, and such as we have all great need of; for who is willing to live with everlasting Burnings? Who would be content to roar in never-ending Tortures? There is no Man who believes there is such a place as Hell, but whensoever he seriously considers of it, most earnestly desires to be secured from it; and therefore among all those, who are not Atheistical or desperately loose and inconsiderate, we see there are few or none, who will not make some Profession, and perform some outward and easie Acts of Religion, that thereby they may quiet
B 3 their

their own Consciences, with some confidence, altho' never so groundless, of their share in this Salvation. But then,

Secondly, As for those other Evils which Christ came to save us from, *viz. Our sins*; Men are not ordinarily so fully persuaded of their Illness, nor think they have any great need to be saved from them. For their Sins they dearly love and take delight in; and therefore they do not look upon it as a Salvation, but as a Spoil, to have them taken from them. And yet it is most certain, that this was the great Salvation which Christ design'd us, and which he became Man to procure for us; *he shall be called Jesus*, saith the Angel, *because he shall save his People from their sins*.

Our greatest Evils are our Sins, and Christ's saving is his reforming, and reducing the hearts of the sinful and disobedient to the Obedience of the Just: He saves when he makes the bold, irreligious Man awful, and the proud Man humble; when he possesseth the hearts of the peevish and contentious, of the envious and revengeful, with Meekness and Patience, Charity and Peace. He delivers the covetous Man from his unsatiable Love of Riches, the carnal Mind from its intemperate

perate Desire of sensual Pleasures. In one word, he saves us from our own Self-will, and makes us to become entirely resign'd to the Will of God.

This reformation of our Hearts and Lives, by rescuing us from all sinful Lusts and wicked Practices, was the great Deliverance which Christ was sent to effect for us, as might be evidenced from the *blessing promised to Abraham* ; which as St. Peter expounds it, did principally intend it ; *Act. 3. 25, 26.* from the Predictions of Prophets concerning the Messiah, which clearly foretold it, *Ezek. 11. 19, 20. Isa. 62. 25. Jer. 32. 39.* from the Covenant promised to be made with *the house of Israel in those days* ; whereof Jeremiah speaks, which in plain terms expresses it, *Jer. 31. 33.* from the Declarations of Christ and his Apostles, who every where proclaim, that the End of his Coming was *to call Sinners to repentance, Mat. 9. 13. To turn Men from darkness to light, Act. 26. 18. To redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14.* and that his Gospel appears bringing Salvation in teaching us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, godly, and righteously in this pre-

sent World, Tit. 2. 11, 12. All these are so many direct Arguments, and clear Proofs of Christ's design to save Men, by making them better, and that his Deliverance was to consist chiefly in their Reformation, and in rescuing them from the Bondage of their Sins.

But in regard the Gospel of Christ is the great Means of working this Deliverance, and the *Power of God*, as St. Paul calls it, *to Salvation*, I shall rather chuse at present to insist more particularly upon such Parts of it, as are peculiarly fitted for this design, which will be the best way of demonstrating this Doctrine. And those are chiefly Three; the Precepts, the Promises, the Threatnings, which are declared to us therein.

First, I shall consider *the Precepts of the Gospel*; and that the great Salvation which these are designed to promote among us, is this Deliverance from our Sins, is plain from hence, because they do most fully, and indispensibly exact it. Never did any Laws of former Legislators, extend the compass of Vertue so wide, and advance it to such a pitch, as the Laws of Christ do; they require a more full Obedience, and a
more

more perfect Reformation, than before that time the World had ever heard of; they teach Vertue in the highest degrees, and require Obedience in all imaginable Instances; representing plainly the Nature of several Sins, and discovering clearly an Irregularity and Sinfulness in several Actions, which the *Gentiles*, nay even the *Jews* themselves, never dream'd of.

1. They represent the Nature of several Sins, and discover an Irregularity in several Actions, which by the bare Light, and Law of Nature the *Gentiles* never saw: They discern'd no Evil in worshipping of Images, and inferiour Deities, in idolatrous Rites, and superstitious Observances; they knew no sin in hating of an Enemy, in cursing and reproaching of him, in returning his Affronts, and revenging his Injuries; Uncleaness and Lasciviousness, Fornication and Whoredoms were held generally among them to be as lawful as their Meats and Drinks; in these Actions as in several others, they had no Sense of Sin, nor any Fears of Punishment; these things, as the Psalmist says, God afterwards shew'd to Jacob, and declared to Israel; but as for the heathen Nations, they have not
known

known them, Psalm 147. 19, 20. but as for the Sinsfulness of all these things, and the dreadful Sentence which shall be denounc'd upon all, who continue in these Practices, the Law of Christ is expresse and peremptory. He that looks upon a Woman, saith our Saviour, to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his heart, Matt. 5. 28. The works of the flesh, saith St. Paul, are manifest, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness; of the which I tell you, that they who do such things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, Gal. 5. 19, 21. He who hates his Brother, saith St. John, by the Sentence of our Law, is a Murderer, 1 Joh. 3. 15. and he who is angry with him without a cause; especially, if he suffer his Anger to transport him into reproachful Words, and contumelious Expressions; such as Fool, and Racha, or empty Fellow, He is liable, says our Saviour, to Hell-fire, Matt. 5. 22. Render to no man evil for evil, says our Religion, but love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you, that so you may be perfect, and the true Children of your Father which is in Heaven, who is kind even to the unthankful, and

A Deliverance from Sin.

11

and the evil, Matt. 5. 44, 45, 48. and as for the guidance and direction of all religious Worship, we are forbid to give that to any Creature whatsoever, whether Saint or Angel ; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Matt. 4. 10.

As for all those Sins then, which the Law of Nature did not discover at all, or but very darkly, to the Heathens of old ; they are all most plainly discover'd to us Christians by the Law of Christ ; we are shew'd Sin more plainly, and taught it more fully, because we must be reformed from it more perfectly than ever they were.

2. The Laws of Christ discover an Irregularity, and Sinfulness in several Actions, which *the Jews* discern'd not under the *Law of Moses* ; altho' they had a more perfect way to walk by, than the Heathens had, yet even their Obedience fell much short of that pitch which ours must attain to ; for in several things, as *the marrying of many Wives*, the *putting away their Wives for every cause*, the *praying against their Enemies*, and *retaliating of their Injuries* ; the Law it self was indulgent to them, by reason of the hardness of their hearts. And as for other

ther things, whose Sinfulness the Law did really discover to them; they were still kept in a general Ignorance of them, thro' the corrupt Glosses, and perverse Interpretations of their *Wise Men*. Of these our Saviour has given us several Instances; for as for the main, and most substantial Duties of the Law; such as *Justice, Mercy, and the like*; they had made them needless, by an Opinion of the sufficiency, either of their Sacrifices, for which the Prophets are often reproving them, or of some cheap exterior Performances. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees*, says our Saviour, *for they pay tythe of Mint, Anise and Cummin; but omit the weightier Matters of the Law, as Judgment, Mercy and Faith; whereas these things chiefly, ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone*, Matt. 23. 23. They had taken off all Duty to Parents requir'd in the *Fifth Commandment*, by an unrighteous Vow, or Oath called *Corban*, of their own devising. *Ye say*, says our Saviour, in opposition to what God has said in the *Fifth Commandment*; *That if a man shall say to his Father or Mother, it is Corban, i. e. a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him*

no more to do any thing for his Father or Mother, Mark 7. 11, 12. They had evacuated the Obligation, and cancell'd in great part the Reverence that is due to Oaths, by their corrupt Casuistry about them: *Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, says Christ, which say, whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing; or whosoever shall swear by the Altar, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the Gold of the Temple, or the Gift upon the Altar, he is bound by his Oath to become a Debtor, Matt. 23. 16, 18.* They had undermin'd all Obligations of Conscience to Obedience towards the *Roman* Governours, because they were Foreigners and Heathens, and by a proud conceit of their own Freedom and Privileges, as they were *Abraham's* Children. For upon this account, it was they came to Christ, with that captious Question, *Master, what thinkest thou, Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not?* hoping by his Answer to have matter to accuse him, either of Disloyalty to *Caesar* if he denied, or of betraying the Freedoms and Privileges of the *Jewish Nation* if he affirm'd it, *Matt. 23. 15, 16, 17.*

Thus defective was the Sense of Duty, which even the *Jews* themselves were generally guided by under *Moses's*
Law.

Law. But when Christ came he supply'd all these Defects, and made up every thing which before was wanting. *I am not come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets,* saith he, *but πληρῶσαι,* to fill up, or to fulfill them, Matt. 5. 17. He set down all those things which *Moses* had omitted, and restored all those Laws to their true meaning, which the *Pharisees* had corrupted. He drew up a most compleat Body of all manner of Vertues, such as neither the *Gentile*, nor the *Jewish* World had ever seen before; and these he enjoyns for the indispenfible Duties of his Kingdom. For *except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,* saith he, *you shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,* Matt. 5. 20.

As for the Laws and Precepts of the Gospel then, 'tis plain, that the Salvation which they are so rarely fitted to effect in us, is the Reformation of our Lives, and a Deliverance from our Sins. Their End is plainly to oblige us to the highest Virtue, and the most exalted Piety, to make us better Men, and more perfect Livers, than ever the World had seen before. They require the most compleat Amendment and Reformation
of

of our Lives, and therefore are a most powerful Means in effecting our Salvation. I come now,

Secondly, To consider the Promises of the Gospel, and the Deliverance which they aim at, is the very same Reformation of our Lives, which is design'd by all those Precepts, which they are annexed to. They are made to us for no other end; but to quicken our Obedience, and encourage it: They are used as means to excite our Endeavours, and make us diligent in the pursuit of that Reformation and Amendment, which are the very thing that they are made to. For all the Promises of Pardon and Happiness in the Gospel run upon condition of our Repentance. *Except ye repent*, says our Saviour, *ye shall all perish*, Luk. 13. 3. and when he sends out his Apostles to proclaim Remission of Sins, and other Benefits purchased by his Death to all the World, he makes this the terms whereon they are to be tendred; *Preach repentance and remission of sins*, says he, *in my Name to all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem*, Luk. 24. 47. Christ never died to procure Men a Liberty to sin, and to purchase Benefits and Rewards for evil doers;

doers ; no, his great Design was to destroy Sin, and to draw Men on to Obedience and Repentance, by the gracious Offers of Pardon and Acceptance. So that as for all the Promises of the Gospel, the Salvation which they encourage, is plainly this Deliverance from our Sins, that being the very thing which all the good things of the Gospel are promised to.

Nay, I add further, If God had not told us, that all the Promises of the next Life run upon condition of Mens Repentance, and Reformation here in this ; yet the very Nature of the Things themselves, would sufficiently suggest it to us. For the Happiness of the next Life cannot be enjoy'd by wicked Men ; there is an Impossibility in the thing ; eternal Happiness, and an unholy Soul, are things inconsistent ; so that till Men have mortified their wicked Lusts, and are deliver'd from their Sins, they are not capable to partake of it ; for the great Happiness of the beatifick Vision, St. *John* tells us, is to change us into God's Image, and to transform us into his likeness ; *When he appears, saith he, we shall be like him ; because we shall see him as he is,* 1 Joh. 3. 2. Now this Image of God, as St. *Paul* tells us, consists in righteousness
ness

ness and true holiness, Ephes. 4. 24. God has made our Duty to be only a Transcript of his own Perfections; he requires no more of us than to be such as he is himself, that we may be meet to live with him, and take delight in him for ever and ever. If then we would hope to enjoy God, in being like him in the next World, we must study to be vertuous here in this; we have no share of his likeness, as long as we wallow in Sin and Wickedness; and so far as we are unlike, we are incapable, if he should be suppos'd to give way to it never so much, of partaking in that Happiness, which consists in our likeness, and resemblance to him.

This Happiness of the beatifick Vision then, which consists in a near resemblance to God himself, a wicked Man cannot receive, since all manner of Wickedness renders us most utterly unlike to him, and as for any other Happiness, which we may promise our selves to find there; Men of sinful Lives and Inclinations are as utterly incapable of that too: For so long as their Natures are corrupt, and sinful Lusts and Dispositions reign in them, they can take no delight in the other World, nor would Heaven it self,
e if

if they were admitted into it, be a place of Pleasure to them. Thus for instance, if a Man is wholly given up to Lust and Intemperance; if his greatest Pleasure be in Revellings and Drunkenness, in Luxury and Wantonness, in Licentiousness, Mirth and Riotous Entertainments, he would as soon be condemned to Abstinence and Fasting, and other Religious Severities, and Self-denials here on Earth, as to undergo the very same in Heaven. For there he must needs starve his eager Desire, and languish in the pain of an unsatisfied Appetite, the place it self affording no such things, as would content them: *In the Resurrection from the dead,* says our Saviour, *they neither Marry, nor are given in Marriage:* That is a Fool's Wish, and a Mahometan's Paradise; they neither eat nor drink to sustain them, since *they cannot die any more; being in these respects not like Men on Earth, but equal to the Angels of God in Heaven, Luk. 20, 35, 36.* Again, if a Man is turbulent and factious, apt to set Friends at odds, and to enflame Enmities; if his whole delight is to stir up Strife, and to engage Parties; in Heaven he must live alone, for he will find no Abettors, nor Encouragers, nor after all his Labour procure

procure so much as one adherent in that most peaceable and quiet place.

Again, if a Man is ill-natur'd and envious; if he mourns because others rejoice, and grieves at the prosperity of his Neighbours; to place him in Heaven, where even the meanest Souls, whom he most contemned on Earth, are Crown'd with immortal Happiness, would be the readiest way both infinitely to heighten, and to perpetuate his Torments.

Again, if a Man's heart is full of hatred and malice, if he delights in doing mischief, and is glad at his Soul when he can work his spite, and revenge an injury; what should he do in Heaven, where there is nothing else but Mercy, Forgiveness and Love. There are none there, but who have loved, not only their Friends, but even their Enemies: they have sought the Good of all the World, and have hazarded, yea, when it was needful, laid down their own Lives to confirm, or bring others to the Truth, and make them happy. This was the Gallantry of their Vertue then, and it is their immortal Honour and Delight now; they still reflect upon it, and always rejoice in it; and then to make such a Man as this a constant Witness of

that joy, is to confute and reproach, to shame and torment him for evermore.

Again, if a Man is proud and ambitious, if he give himself up to assume state, and expect attendance; if his highest aim be to be above his Brethren, and to have them submit and pay a deference, to bow and cringe to him; what delight should he take in Heaven, where he would find every Saint rais'd to Honour, whilst he stands off at a distance, only as a Looker on; for all the Saints in Heaven, yea, even the very meanest whom he accounted unworthy to come into his Presence here on Earth, are Christ's Brethren, and God's Heirs; they are set upon a Throne, and Crown'd with an unspeakable and immortal weight of Glory. And this all the Saints about them, whether higher or lower in Happiness and Honour, according as the degrees of their Faith and Obedience in this World have been, are infinitely pleas'd with. For whilst they were here on Earth, they were wont to esteem others better than themselves, Phil. 2. 3. And to look every man not so much upon his own things, as the things of others, 1 Cor. 13. 24. And this temper they carried to Heaven with them, where every one rejoices with

with each other, and counts his Brother's Happiness his own : If this Man then were there, he would see all those exalted, whom his Pride would make low ; he would see them honoured, whom he would have despised ; he would grieve and envy, fret and fume alone, and find them honour'd, and himself unpitied, and contemn'd to all Eternity.

Lastly, If a Man is an Enemy of God, and an hater of Religion, if it has been his Practice to vilify God's Saints, and to deride his Ordinances, to burlesque the Holy Scriptures, or to blaspheme the Deity ; what content of heart think you could it be to him, to see there is a God of utmost Majesty and Excellence, mighty and irresistible in Power to reward his Saints, and as a flaming Fire to consume his Enemies ? To see, that Heaven and Hell, which he boldly and securely contemn'd as fabulous, are dreadful Realities ? To see what being Religious comes to, which he derided ; and all good Men fix'd in height of Glory whom he had despis'd, and thence expect the miserable state of those Men, who had set themselves as he had done, to laugh God's Servants out of their Religion ; or out-brave himself out of his
C 3 Being ?

Being? Surely to such a Person, this sight of Heaven could be nothing less than the first Horrors and Amazements, the beginning and foretaste of Hell.

And thus it appears, that all the Sins of Impiety towards God, of Pride, and Intemperance, of Envy, Hatred, Uncharitableness, and Unpeaceableness, which take up in a manner, the whole Compass of Transgressions, are all so many direct Hindrances, and utter Incapacities to our enjoying any Happiness in Heaven; they make us dead to all the Enjoyments, and wholly unfit for the Company of that place; *For what*

Eccl. 13.
16, 17, 18.

Communication hath God with wickedness; what fellowship, saith the Apostle, hath righteousness with unrighteousness; what Communion hath light with darkness, 1 Cor. 6. 14. Nay, the being in Heaven with all our Sins unmortified about us, would not only deprive us of all the Happiness and Pleasure of that blessed place; but it would also render it an uneasy state, and make Heaven it self become in part a Hell to us. For it would fill us, as I have shown, with shame and discontent, with remorse of mind, and grief of heart, with eternal Torment and Vexation.

As for this Reformation of our Lives and Natures, and Deliverance from Sin, here then, it is plainly requisite and indispensibly necessary, to fit and capacitate us for any Enjoyments of Happiness in Heaven hereafter. And this the Scriptures plainly affirm concerning it. St. Paul tells us, That *the Vessels of Mercy*, must thro' that method of Faith and Repentance which God has prescribed, be *prepared unto Glory*, Rom. 9. 23. And that *God's delivering us from the power of darkness, hath made us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in light*, Col. 1. 12, 13. And our Saviour says expressly, That *except we put off the Old Man, which is corrupted by sinful Lusts, and be born again, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, Joh. 3. 3.

This then is clear both from the Declarations of the Scripture, and the Evidence of the thing, that a Life of Virtue is plainly necessary to our future Happiness; and that our being saved from Sin in this World, is indispensibly requisite to our Salvation in the next. The eternal Life of Heaven is a Life, as I have shewn, that is after the *likeness and similitude of God's*; a Life of unspotted Vertue, and compleat Goodness, that im-

plies an entire Exemption, and most absolute Deliverance from all manner of Sin.

This Perfection and Compleatness of it we must expect in Heaven; where, as St. Paul says, *The Spirits of just Men are made perfect*, Heb 12. 23. But as for the Life it self, we must enter upon it, and begin it here. That Life of Vertue and Reformation, which we engage upon at our becoming Christians, is that very Life which never ends, but which is to grow up to full degrees, and to be eternal in the Heavens. And therefore, the Scriptures, as in respect of the full Perfection and Fruition of it, which is to be had in the next World, they are wont to speak of it as a thing future; so in respect of that more imperfect Enjoyment, which we have of it in this World, they use sometimes to speak of it as a thing possess'd here. *He that believes on me*, saith our Saviour, *hath eternal Life*, Joh. 6. 47. And again, *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life*, Verse 54. St. John bids them, *That believe on the Name of the Son of God, know that they have eternal life*, 1 Joh. 5. 12. And that Grace or Goodness of Spirit, which our Saviour expressed by *Water*, Joh. 4. and which he bid *the Woman of Samaria* to ask
of

of him, Verse 10. he tells her, *Shall be a Well of Water springing up to eternal life,* Verse 14.

A Life of Vertue and Obedience then, is not only a necessary Qualification for our Salvation, and eternal Life in Heaven; but in a degree it is that very Salvation and eternal Life it self; our Deliverance from our Sins, is not only the way to Happiness, but in an imperfect measure it is that very Happiness, whose Perfection and compleat Degrees we are bid to hope for in Heaven. The Misery that befell us all in *Adam*, was *our falling from God's Image*, wherein he and all his Holy Angels are infinitely Happy; and that Happiness and Salvation which is promised to us in Christ, is our Restoration to it. So that as for the Promises of God, 'tis clear from them, that the great Salvation which they are designed for, is this Deliverance from our Sins; since all other promised Blessings are made to depend upon it, since it is not possible they should be had without it; nay, since this Deliverance is the chief promis'd Mercy, and even Happiness, and eternal Life it self; and as to the third part of the Gospel, I propos'd to speak to, *viz.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Those *Threatnings* which are contain'd therein, the Salvation which they aim at, is evidently this Deliverance from our Sins, which are those very things they are all denounced to. The Gospel, tho' it breathe out nothing but Grace and Mercy to the Penitent, is yet the severest Dispensation that ever was to all incorrigible Men. For therein God declares himself an utter Enemy to all that will not be reformed, and that he will inflict a most terrible Punishment, and exemplary Vengeance on them; the Author of Grace and Mercy, Christ himself hath spoken it, *That except we repent, we shall all perish*, Luk. 13. 3. And St. Paul tells us plainly, *That at the last Day, God will render to all that obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, and that upon every soul of Man, whether he be Jew or Gentile*, Rom. 2. 6, 8, 9, 10. Our Sins then are plainly those Evils, which the Threatnings of the Gospel would fright us from; and our Deliverance from them is that Salvation which they would enforce upon us. Their End is evidently to make us leave all evil ways, for fear least they should be inflicted on us for our perseverance in them.

As

As for that Salvation then, which Christ came to purchase for us, from what I have deliver'd it appears, I suppose, most evidently what it is. The Declarations of the Prophets, of Christ and his Apostles, the prime End of the Precepts, the Promises, and the Threatnings of the Gospel, the Nature of God, of Heaven and Happiness; in a word, the Design of our whole Religion, and Christianity, make it clear to us, that it is our Reformation; or, as the Angel expressed it; our Deliverance from our Sins. *He shall be called Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins.*

And thus having represented what that Salvation is, which Christ came to purchase for us, and shewn, I think clearly, that the great Deliverance design'd us by him, and promoted by his Gospel, is our Reformation, and a Freedom from our Sins. I proceed now,

Secondly, To note some Uses, and particular Improvements of this Discourse.

1. Then from what has been discoursed upon the Nature of the *Christian Salvation*, we may plainly understand, what *Faith*, what *Repentance*, what *Grace*, what

what *Preaching*, what *Ordinances* are saving. For if Salvation mainly consists in our Deliverance from our Sins, as we have evidently seen it doth; then that is a saving Faith which makes us obedient; and that a saving Repentance which works our Amendment; and that is saving Grace, which enables us to a pious Practice; and that is saving Preaching, which is fitted, not to fill us with vain Delights, or learned Niceties, or abstract Speculations, or mysterious Notions, but to awaken our Consciences, and reform our Lives; and those are saving Ordinances, which are powerful and proper Means of our Conversion, and vertuous Performances. This is to be the End of all the Helps of Religion, and this the Excellency of all the Means of Grace, that they tend strongly to make us leave our Sins, and rescue us from Disobedience. Our Salvation is a Deliverance from our Sins, and then any thing is saving when it delivers and frees us from them.

2. A second Use which I shall note of this Discourse, is for the *Tryal of our State*; to know whether we are indeed of the number of the saved or no; for if Salvation consists in our Deliverance from our Sins, then they are not saved but

but lost Men, who still live in them, and are enslaved to them. Is any Man then a contemner, or prophaner of God, of his dreadful Name, or of his holy Word? Doth he spend his time in Luxury and Wantonness, Pride and Covetousness? Are his hands full of Violence? or is he a stranger to the ways of Peace? In fine, if he doth not make it his business and care, to fear God and keep his Commandments, to be humble, chaste and temperate; to do all Men Justice, and to speak the Truth, and love all, even his Enemies, and employ himself in all the instances of Duty, which must at the last and great Day be the matter of his Account, he has either no share at all, or not enough, in Christ's Salvation. The chiefest Grace which they enjoy, is the Grace of Forbearance. God doth not snatch some of them away in their deplorable, nor others in their insecure Condition, but allows them time and opportunities of Reformation; and the only advice which I can give them, is to renounce their evil Courses, and to live as new Men; and then they may comfortably conclude, that they are in a safe state, and are not without their part in that Salvation which Christ came to procure for them.

3. A third Use and Improvement, which I shall make of this Discourse, is for the directing of our Charity; in showing what things we ought most chiefly to desire and endeavour after for our Brethren. For if our greatest Happiness, and the great Salvation which Christ came to procure for us, consist in our Deliverance from our Sins, and we are to love our Brethren, as Christ loved us; then 'tis plain, that the great Benefit which we are to seek for them, is their vertuous Life and Reformation. Holiness is the greatest Kindness which they can receive, or we can endeavour to promote in them: And therefore, among all those Endeavours, which are very commendably used for our Brethren's good, whether in their Bodies, good Names, or Fortunes, let us still be sure to have an Eye to their highest Good of all, their increase in good Living, and their Deliverance from their Sins; let our greatest care be to make them better, rather than richer, and more honourable than they were. For this is true Kindness and Love indeed to show our selves most concern'd for that whereby they will be infinitely most advantag'd.

This

This Deliverance from their Sins then, is that which above all things, we should endeavour to procure for them ; and as this should be the great Aim of all our Labours for their advantage, so should it be of those more especially, which are employ'd for reclaiming them from a false Religion, or establishing them in a right one. For Repentance and Reformation are necessary to Salvation in all Parties, and must carry Men (whose other Errors God shall see fit to excuse, because of the Pityableness of their Ignorance) to Heaven in all the Sects of the Christian World. And therefore, if we convert a Man to a Party, but not to Obedience, we win a Profelyte but half way, and have not *saved a soul from* Jam. 5. 19, *death,* till we have reduced him, as from ^{20.} Error, so from Sin too. In all our Endeavours therefore of this sort, let us strive at least as much to win Men to the Practice, as to the Profession of the Truth. Let us seek as much to rectify their Hearts, as their Understandings, and to get them over unto an entire Obedience unto Christ, and not only to an external Communion with our selves.

Some indeed, instead of endeavouring to save, and rescue others from their Sins; take

take a pride in inveagling, and insnar-
ring them into Sin. They will Glory in
making a sober Man drunk ; or in cor-
rupting a modest Vertue, and drawing
it Captive at last to Acts, and places of
Debauchery ; and some set up to ridicule
all Religion and Vertue, making them
the Topicks of their Jest and Merry-
ment, this way driving those out of all
Professions, and open owning thereof,
who cannot bear to be laugh'd at.

Now these Men, who thus make it
their business, to decoy Men into Sin,
are not only unchristian, but base and
barbarous. They betray them under
a pretence of Kindness, and seek eter-
nally to destroy them under a Mask of
Friendship. They are vile Wretches,
and mischievous Instruments ; nay, I
might say they are Devils, and Destroy-
ers in the very same Sence that Christ
is a Saviour : For he saves in rescuing,
and delivering Men from their Sins,
and they destroy them in entangling
them therein, and making them subject
to them.

And these are the Uses which I think
fit to draw from the foregoing Notion,
and Explication of the Christian Salva-
tion.

And

And God grant, that whilst we are all talking and hoping for Salvation, we may not appear at last, to have been all the while lost Men; but that we may all make it our chiefest care, to get rid of all sinful Habits and wicked Courses, whilst we are in this World; that so we may be qualified for the Joys of Heaven, and the Conversation of Blessed Spirits, and delivered from those eternal Punishments, which will be inflicted on all that are irreclamably disobedient in the World to come. *Amen.*

D

DIS.

And God grant that whilst we are
all tithing and hoping for deliverance we
may not appear as idle to have done all
the while but Men; for that we may
all make in our several ways of getting
of all things that we can and cannot
which we are in this World. And we
may be pushing out the latter part
and the A. on the one hand of this
and deliver us from all our sins
which will be the end of all
that are necessarily fitted to be the
World to come.

th
it
m
th
fe
an
ed
gi
no

DISCOURSE II.

Showing that this Deliverance, and intire Obedience, is neither impossible, nor extream difficult, if sincere Christians set about it as they ought.

On Phil. 4. 13. I can do all things thro' Christ which strengthens me.

THE Things St. Paul here Glories himself able to perform, are the Duties of a Christian, even those that are the greatest Tryal of a strong, and well fixed Mind, and have more than ordinary Temptation in them; such as the knowledge of our selves, and serving God in a prosperous, and trusting in him, and being contented in a necessitous, State. And that which gives him this Ability, he confesses, is not any Power of Nature derived from

Adam, but the super-induced Grace of Christ, which aids and strengthens him. In that forlorn state, wherein *Adam's* sin left all Mankind, subject to strong Lusts, surrounded with numerous and powerful Temptations, and stript of all Divine Aids, and super-natural Assistances, they all lay open to be made a prey, and were easie to be overcome. But since Christ has been the Restorer of the World, and recover'd more Grace and Strength for us than ever *Adam* forfeited; they are again enabled to withstand Temptations, and perform all Duties unto God, even those which seem to have most hardship in them. *I know both how to be abased, or live meanly, and how to abound in Honour and Plenty; every where, and in all places, I am instructed both to be full without forgetting God, and to be hungry without repining at him; both to abound, and still be humble and temperate, and to suffer need, and at the same time praise and trust God, and rest contented; I can do all things thro' Christ that strengthens me, Vers. 12, 13.*

By this performance of all Duties, we are not to understand such a perfection of Obedience to them, as is intermix'd with no Escapes; for so Christ doth not enable

enable any of his Servants in this World, no not *St. Paul* himself. To live without all sin is not to be expected from any mortal Man, but only from the strength of an Angel, or a just Soul made perfect in Heaven. Some Sins of Ignorance, or Forgetfulness, hast and surprize, such as *Paul's Speech to Ananias*, Acts 23. 3. will adhere to the best Men whilst they have earthly Bodies about them: And Christ, who being in our Nature, has a fellow-feeling of all our Infirmities, when he comes to sit as our Judge will make fair allowances for them, *Heb. 5. 2.*

But it implies such a Perfection of Obedience, as admits of no damning Sins; that is, of no Sins which are wilfully incurred against Knowledge, or it may be against Checks and loud Alarms of Conscience; and which are also persisted in without true Repentance, and Amendment of the same. These Sins deprive us of the favour of God, and destroy a Soul; and therefore, Christ must strengthen Men against all these, before he proves a Saviour to them. And this Strength *St. Paul* says he found, as all other Christians will, who will make the Experiment as he did, and not be wanting to themselves, or fail to make use of it.

Tho' they will not be strengthened against all involuntary Surprizes ; yet, if they are as careful to employ this Grace as Christ is ready to afford it, they will be strengthened against all wilful Breaches of any Commandments, or at least against all impenitent continuance in the same, when at any time they have wilfully broken any. *I can do all things thro' Christ that strengthens me.*

My design from these words, is to show that the Grace of Christ is ready to enable all Christians to obey his Laws ; who are not wanting in their own Care and good Endeavours. He earnestly desires the Obedience of Men, and affords them Aid sufficient to help it on : So that no Christian can ever fail to do his Duty, but thro' his own fault, when he either neglects, or rejects that Help and Grace, which our Saviour Christ holds out to him.

Indeed the great Excuse which disobedient Men are wont to make for themselves is, that they would do better if they knew how to do it, and are therefore only ill, because they cannot help it. They would plead Impotence in themselves, and impracticable Heights and Impossibilities in God's Commandments. And if this were true, as it
is

is most false, it would be a serviceable Plea indeed, and excuse them both for being ill, and also for being idle: For if they cannot avoid being disobedient, why should they be blam'd for it? And if they are not able to obey, do what they can, why should they throw away their Pains in vain Attempts, and fruitlessly endeavour after it? There is neither Duty, nor Discretion in attempting impossibilities, and labouring after that which is not to be done: so that if Obedience were impossible, every Man might as innocently, and much more wisely, disobey at first, as at last, when he has striven in vain against it; and it ought not to be censur'd as the fault of his Choice, but pitied as his invincible Misfortune.

Now as for this impotence, and impossibility of performing all Duties, it is often pleaded by those, who seem willing and desirous to perform them. And in regard it gives some Colour to this complaint, because we hear it from those, who have try'd the Hardship, and so from their own Experience are best able to judge of it, and who express a Goodwill for their Duty, and so may be presum'd to complain of nothing but what they find. In treating of this Subject, I shall,

Obedience neither Impossible,

First, Remove the Prejudice which lies against this Power of obeying, from these Complaints, by showing what is wanting in these Complainers.

Secondly, Shew that among Christians, there is no cause for such Complaints; and that they will be strengthened to the performance of all Duties, if they are not wanting to themselves.

Thirdly, That this performance is so far from being an impossible Task, that 'tis not extream Difficult, when Men set to it in earnest.

♦

I. To shew the Power all Christians have, thro' the Grace of Christ enabling them; of performing all needful Duties, if they are not wanting to themselves; I shall remove the prejudice which lies against it from these Complaints, by shewing what is wanting in these Complainers.

Now in pursuit of this I observe, that they who complain of the Impossibility of doing their Duty, are either

First, Such as only complain, but never try and endeavour it. Or,

Secondly, Such as endeavour wrong, without using those fit means, which should make them obedient. Or,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Such as when they use right means, endeavour but by halves, and do not go thorow with it.

1. I say, they who complain most of the Impossibility of doing their Duty, are such as never try and endeavour it, and take least Pains for it.

Nothing is so common with Men, as to pretend they cannot do, what they have no mind to do. Thus it is in daily Instances of common Life; a sluggish Servant cannot go thro' with a painful Work; a half Friend cannot perform a troublesome, and costly part of Friendship; and a Man in Power or Business, cannot do some Offices, or shew some Favours, which are desired of him: They cannot, *i.e.* they will not do them; they want not the Power and Opportunity if they would, but only the Will and Readiness to make use of it. And thus it is in Religion also. Men pretend the keeping God's Commands to be an impossible Task, when they do not believe it; or believe it impossible without making any attempt, and before they have had any tryal of it; passing a Judgment not from what they feel, but only from what they fantasie in it. They have a mind
to

to spare their own pains about it; or are affrighted with some ill reports and misrepresentations which are made thereof, and so presume they cannot do it, without ever trying whether they can or no.

But now when this is the Case, as it is with very many Persons, the hindrance of Obedience does not lie in the Duties, but in the Men themselves that are to perform them: For let the Laws of God be as possible to be fulfilled, as they will; yet is it not possible for a loitering and unworking person to fulfil them. It is impossible to accomplish things of Pains without Pains, or to produce the effects of Industry by Idleness. And Obedience to God's Laws is one of those things, which requires our watchful Care and diligent Application. For tho' God gives it, 'tis true, whence all Vertues are call'd the *Fruits of the spirit*, Gal. 5. 22. and the *renewal of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. Yet is that Gift only by blessing our own Pains and Endeavours after it. He gives us Vertue and Grace, as he gives us our daily Food and Maintenance by helping, and enabling us, thro' our own Care and Labour, to get them for our selves. So that they are to be the Fruit of our Industry,

dustry, as well as of his Bounty: Whence we are bid *to turn our selves from all our transgressions*, Ezek. 18. 30, 32. as well as to pray to God, *That he would turn us*, Jer. 31. 18. and *to work out our own Salvation*; for this reason, *because God worketh in us*, Phil. 2. 12, 13.

If Men never endeavour then, but only complain, it is not possible for them to obey and please God, more than to gain an Art, or get a Livelihood, or perform any other thing that requires their own Care and diligent Application; but if they will take the way of Industry, and instead of complaining they cannot obey, endeavour to obey the best they can, which is in their own power, and very possible to be done, They will see all the fancied Impossibilities fly before their Pains, and go on successfully thro' God's Grace, strengthening them; and this Course would soon take the greatest part of these Complainers off our hands; there being none ordinarily so forward to complain of the impossibility of obeying, as they who are most negligent and careless, and least of all endeavour to obey.

But if any of those complain they cannot obey God's Laws, who do endeavour it: They are,

2. Gene-

2. Generally such as endeavour wrong, without using those fit means, which should make them obedient. The means and instruments of Duty, are the way that leads us to the performance of it; and in these it concerns us much to be careful, what Choice we make. If we pursue any Vertue, without the use of any means at all, that is, as if we should set our selves to the dispatch of any business with our hands behind us; and if we use improper and unsuitable ones, like men who labour with ill Instruments in any Craft, we shall make but rugged work, and find that too to prove very toilsome and difficult; and after much time and Pains is spent, see but a very little Fruit of all. The means of Vertue are, as I say, the way to it: And therefore, there is as much depends upon the means we use, when we would be vertuous, as upon the way we take, when we would travel to any Town or Place; we may go the straight Road to it, and that brings us thither in a short time, and without being much wearied; but if either we take a contrary path, or go much about, we shall spend much more time, and be much more tired in going; yea forced, perhaps, at last to sit down short of our Journeys-end. And

And this now is an ordinary fault of those Complainers, who endeavour to obey without Success, and cannot compass any Vertue, tho' they do take Pains for it. The reason why they fail, is because they are not well directed, and their Labour is not wisely manag'd, and laid out in the use of such means, and in the practice of such Rules, as are most proper and likely to gain the Point, and introduce the Vertue which they wanted.

To illustrate this by some Instances; one Man is of an irritable hasty Temper; and he complains that he has striven, but is not able to bridle and conquer his Passion; he labours, and doth what he can; but such is the distracting Variety of his business, the Crossness or Carelessness of those he is concern'd with, or the number of his Provocations one way or other, that notwithstanding all his Care, his Passion is still too strong for him.

But I would ask that Person, who says his Labour is lost, whether he advised well upon what he did, and took the ready, and the right way to this Conquest? Has he for instance, besides his earnest Prayers to God for Grace to master

fter his Passion, avoided moreover, as much as the concerns of Life will suffer him, all unnecessary Discourse, especially Disputes, with wrathful, loud, cross, or scornful Persons; has he watched over himself daily at such Times, and Places, and in such Business and Company, wherein he was like to meet with Provocations, and particularly resolv'd within himself, not only long before, but at those very times, that he will not be transported by them? And above all, Lastly, has he made this a constant Law to himself to forbear speaking, or acting any thing suddenly, when he feels a Passion stirr'd in him; but to turn aside, and say over the Lord's Prayer, or some devout Ejaculation to himself, which will both gain him time for Consideration, and likewise call God and Goodness into his mind, which will be the most effectual means of all to restrain him? If these or such like means have not been used, he has not taken the best ways he can; and if he will set himself to bridle his Nature in this way, I doubt not, but God will bless him in it, and then let him complain he cannot restrain himself, if he find reason.

Again,

• Again, Another who has accustomed himself to Oaths, complains that he is convinced he ought, and endeavours to do it, but that he is not able to refrain Swearing. But besides his fervent Prayers to God, has such a Complainer labour'd withal to possess his Conscience, with a great sense and dread of it? Has he particularly call'd to mind, and resolved against it, not only when it was at a distance, but when he was expecting any Disappointment, or coming into the way of any Provocation, which would tempt him to it? And because men subject to this Vice, swear oft in eagerness of Spirit, and do not know it, has he desired some true Friend, to be his Monitor, to warn him of it before, or tell him when 'tis past, that afterwards he may be more careful to prevent it, or to punish himself for it? And in regard men who shun it at other times, are generally push'd on to swear in haste, thro' the surprize of a Provocation, in the eagerness of Sport, or thro' the suddenness of some cross Accident and Disappointment: Has he taken Care lastly to speak nothing rashly, especially whilst he is in heat and eagerness of Spirit, but to bridle his Tongue, and consider what he

is

is about to say before he utter it, that so if it prove to be ill he may forbear it? These and such like ways, are the proper method for curing this Sin; and if a man has labour'd against it, without them, he has sought the end without the means, and pursued the cure without the right Prescriptions. And therefore, if he will correct that Errour, and begin again to labour in right ways, I question not, but, that he will succeed well, and find the effect thro' God's blessing.

Thus do men, who endeavour in vain for these, or for any other Vertues, plainly miscarry, for want of chusing right ways; the Duties are not impossible to be attain'd, if the right Course were used to attain them; but it is their own neglect of means, or mistaken Choice of bad ones, which makes the Disappointment. And therefore, if they would labour to effect, let them be careful to pursue good things, by wise and proper methods. When they are resolved to endeavour after any Vertue, let them learn from good Books, or from their spiritual Guides, or the advice of any wise or judicious Persons, what Rules serve most to compass it: And if they
carefully

carefully and diligently follow them, the Duty which seem'd before impossible, will prove a very possible thing. And this again would rid us of the greatest part of those Complainers who fail at last, but yet endeavour something: for most of them, when they endeavour to obey, do not endeavour wisely, or in the use of such proper and discreet Methods, a sure fit to work Obedience in them.

But if any complain still, that they have taken advice about the best Course, and follow'd it; but yet all their Labour has been without the desir'd Effect: Yet are they always,

3. Such, as when they use right means, endeavour but by halves, and do not go thro' with them.

A faint Endeavourer, will never go thro' with any work, which requires either length of Time, or strength of Labour. If he put little strength to it, that will not conquer the difficulty of the Task; and if he is soon wearied, he will give over before it comes to an end. So that a Man must apply himself to the same, both earnestly and long, if he would succeed when he has begun, and go on to finish and compleat it.

E

Now

Obedience neither Impossible,

Now our obeying God, and amending of our Lives, is a work of this kind. For our Sins being many in number, they will require a considerable space of time, before they are all amended; and our hindrances in leaving them being great, and the Temptations strong that daily assault and draw us to them, and our own Lusts, and a treacherous Enemy in our own Bosoms, being always ready to take their parts and strike in with them, it requires a great Watchfulness, and a constant Care, and an earnest vigorous Endeavour to overcome them. And this the Scripture tells us plainly we must use, if ever we expect to prevail against them; St. Peter tells us, we must *give all diligence*, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 10. St. Paul, that we must *be circumspect*, Eph. 5. 15. Our Blessed Saviour, that we must *watch always*, and be ever standing upon our Guard, Mark 13. 37. and *strive to enter in at the strait gate*, Luk. 13. 24. which striving is call'd a *Warfare*, 2 Cor. 10. 4. and a *Fight*, 1 Tim. 6. 12. All which show the Greatness of that Care, and both the Earnestness and Constancy of that Endeavour, which we must lay out upon it.

And this now is the fault of all those Strivers, who, pursuing Obedience by
right

right and proper Methods, do yet miss of it at last. They endeavour but by halves, and seek it, either by too short, or too sleight Pains. They have not either the Resolution to set manfully about it, or the Patience to go thorow with it; and so being either faint in their pursuit, or falling off before they are got to the end, they are not reclaim'd from their Sins by all their Pains, but continue subject, and enslaved to them still.

But now when they fail on this account, it is not because they cannot, but because they will not help it. They might become good, if they would be at the trouble of it, and persevere with Patience, till they have finish'd it; but if they will use only sleight Endeavours and short Onsets; their missing of Success, must not be charg'd upon the impossibility of God's Laws, but upon their own sloth and remissness in performing them; they can and do take great and incessant Pains to be rich, or great, or compass a worldly Interest: And if they please they can labour as vigorously, and as incessantly too to be good, and do what God commands them. And if once they would do this, it would be the best

Demonstration, how possible a thing Obedience is; since less Pains than this comes to, will ordinarily suffice them to that purpose.

And this will stop the mouths of all those Complainers, who have not been silenc'd by the two former Considerations. If they have not complain'd before they try'd, and if in trying to be good, they took a right method; yet want they one thing still, they endeavour'd but by halves, and were not vigorous and constant enough in their Endeavours, and that is the reason why they failed: Whereas, if they will try again, and endeavour not only wisely, but also vigorously and incessantly, they will most certainly be enabled to perform their Duty: And their doing it actually, will be the most effectual Conviction that 'tis possible to be done.

Having said this, to remove the prejudice that lies against this possibility of performing the Laws of God, from the Complaints of those, who say they find it otherwise: I proceed now,

2. To shew that among Christians, there is no cause for such Complaints, and that they will be strengthened to the
 perfor-

performance of all Duties, if they are not wanting to themselves.

They must be careful, as I have observ'd, to use their own Endeavours, because God that made them, will not also save them without themselves. And these Endeavours must be in wise Ways, since we must not expect God should give Effects to unsuitable Means, and be at the expence of Miracles, to supply for our Follies. And when we endeavour thus wisely, we must do it also vigorously and incessantly; Obedience being a work of Time and Pains, that requires both the earnestness, and the continuance of our Applications. These things are required on our part, and if we take care to perform that, the Grace of Christ will make up the rest, and most certainly enable us, as he did St. Paul, to do all things which he indispensibly requires of us; he will give us some strength at first, and as we employ that, according to that great Rule of Gospel-Distribution, *To him that hath shall be given*, Matt. 25. 29. he will add more, till at last we perform as much, as is indispensibly required, *i. e.* as I noted, either not sinning wilfully, or sincerely repenting, and amending whensoever we

Obedience neither Impossible,

do. If they are thus careful, I say, in their own Endeavours, this strength all Christians shall surely receive from the Grace of Christ to these performances, as the Apostle in the Text declares of himself; *I can do, &c.*

Now that every wise, earnest, and incessant Endeavourer, shall be thus enabled to perform all Duties, will appear from these three Things :

First, Because God indispenfibly requires, and passionately exhorts us to this performance.

Secondly, Because he has promised this Ability, and Obedience to all who are so qualified and prepared for the same.

Thirdly, Because all good Men heretofore, and at this present time, do themselves find, and experience it.

1. That they shall be thus enabled to perform all Duties, appears, because God indispenfibly requires, and passionately exhorts us to this performance.

He indispenfibly requires it. For now, as St. Paul says, *God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, Acts 17. 30.* And that of all Sins, they being all liable to the same Punishment; *The wrath of God being*

being revealed against all unrighteousness, Rom. 1. 18. And he that offends in one point being guilty of all, Jam. 2. 10. And this he requires under the strictest condition, as ever they hope to avoid the Wrath to come, or to obtain everlasting Salvation: If the wicked turn from all his sins, and keep all my Statutes, then says God by Ezekiel, but not before, he shall surely live, Ezek. 18. 21. And they only that do his Commandments have right to the tree of life, saith Christ, Rev. 22. 14.

Now since God thus requires us to obey all his Laws, it must needs be possible for us to obey them; for God never requires an impossible thing; what he Commands, he both desires and * ex-
* Psa. 5. 2.
Matt. 21.
 pects should be performed; and therefore, calls Men to the † performance of^{34.}
 it; to be *not only hearers, but doers of the* † Jam. 1.
25.
Law, Rom. 2. 13. And 'tis certain they Joh: 13. 17.
 may perform it, since he is too wise, either to desire, or expect what is not to be had.

Nay, he doth not only indispensibly require this Obedience, but friendly and passionately exhorts us to it; Repent and turn your selves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruine. Cast away from you all your transgressions, and

Obedience neither Impossible,

make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies; wherefore turn your selves and live ye; i. e. If you sin and die, 'tis from your own Wills, therefore blame your selves and not me, Ezek. 18. 30, 31, 32.

Now this again shows this Obedience to be a possible Work; for God can be no Counsellor or Adviser, much less an importunate pathetical Exhorter to impossible Attempts and Performances.

If Obedience were an impossible thing, his advising us, and exhorting us to obey him, would be no better, than if you should advise a young Stripling to be as strong as *Sampson*; or an ignorant unbred Idiot, to be as wise as *Solomon*: And then how able would Men be to answer and reply to him, that he was not in earnest, and never meant his Advice should be followed, for a very good reason, because he knew it could not. And that this was not the part of a compassionate Friend, who desired to remedy their unhappiness; but of some hard-hearted looker on, who rejoyc'd and triumph'd in the same. That if he would not help their weakness, yet at least in common Pity to the miserable, a good
and

and compassionate Being would forbear to mock and unbraid them with it; and by such insulting Advices and Exhortation, to make those, who are despicably low already, much lower still. All this might be said to God, if the Obedience which he exhorts us to, were an impossible Work; and no just Answer could be return'd to it. For he could not be thought serious in his Advices, and sincere in his Exhortations, or any ways compassionate towards calamitous Men, whose Impotency, under a pretence of helping, at this rate, he would only seek reproachfully to expose: And therefore, if we have any just Reverence for him, from his commanding and exhorting us to it, we must conclude, Obedience to be a thing very possible for us to perform; if we could not do it, he would not have required, or so passionately have pressed us to it.

And as this appears from God's commanding, and exhorting us to it: So doth it,

2. Because he has promised this Ability and Obedience to such wise, earnest and incessant Endeavourers, who are the Persons duely qualified and prepared for them. It was said of old concerning
ing

ing the Gospel-Covenant, that this Power of obeying the whole Will of God should be one part of it. *I will give them one heart, saith God, and put a new spirit within them: and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh: that they may walk in my Statutes, and keep my Ordinances, and do them, Ezek. 11. 19, 20. And again, A new heart will I give you, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them, Ezek. 36. 26, 27. Jer. 31. 31, 33. And one part of the Holy Covenant sworn with Abraham, Zachariah tells us, speaking by the Holy Ghost, was to grant us Grace to serve him in holiness and righteousness all our days, Luk. 1. 72, 73, 74, 75. in which Predictions, God promises both the Effect, viz. Mens keeping his Judgments and Statutes, and the Principle or Cause of it, viz. his Grace and Holy Spirit, which should enable them so to do.*

And when Christ came to Seal the New Covenant in his Blood, this Grace and Strength, is accordingly promised and assured to all discreet, earnest and incessant Endeavourers, who alone are the Persons qualified for it: For in that God
promises

promises, *To give the Holy Spirit to those that * ask him*, Luk. 11. 13. and still * Jam. 5. to entrust a greater measure of Grace, with those who are industrious to improve a small beginning; *To him that hath*, i. e. hath improv'd what he was entrusted with, *shall more be given, and he shall have abundance*, Matt. 25. 29. and to work both the Will, and the Deed, in those who heartily joyn with him, and do their best endeavour towards the same; *Work out your own Salvation, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do*; and therefore, go on with Courage in that Expectation, Phil. 2. 11, 12. So that this spiritual Power and Strength to all vigorous Attempters, is not left at uncertainties, but is a promised thing. God's word stands engaged for it: So that they are as sure, in any Case of need to be enabled, as they are sure that God is faithful, and cannot recede from his Word. *God is faithful*, saith St. Paul, speaking of those great Tryals, where Obedience seems most of all impracticable, *and will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the Temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*, 1 Cor. 10. 13.

Thus

Thus have we an assurance, that God will give us all so much Grace and Strength, as will suffice to make us good, if we diligently, and discreetly apply our selves to become so. This God engages, and he doth not only permit, but expect that we should believe him, and take his word in this, as well as in all other Promises. He would not only have us to have *faith in his mercy*, for the pardon of any Sins when we repent of them, but likewise to have *faith in his power and spirit*, enabling us to overcome our Sins, when we seriously strive against them. When St. Paul bids us *work out our own Salvation*, he gives *God's working in us*, as the reason, plainly directing us to work in that Expectation, *Phil. 2. 11, 12*. And *we are kept to Salvation by the Power of God thro' Faith*, i. e. thro' Faith in the Power, *faith St. Peter, 1 Pet. 1. 5*. God has promised his Spirit to strengthen us against Sin, as well as his Mercy to pardon and forgive Sin. And since he has promised both; our Duty is to believe both, and not distrust him in either of them.

And since we both may and ought to have this Confidence in God's Grace; that will perfectly answer the main Ob-
jection

jection against the possibility of this performance, which is taken from our selves, and the reigning Power of our own Lusts. For our Lusts are not too strong for God, tho' they be too strong for us: Tho' there be great Might in corrupt Nature, yet the Grace of Christ is mightier: And therefore, having that on our side, we shall certainly be empowered to please God, let our own sinful Lusts, and the Temptations of the World, oppose themselves never so much against it. *Greater is he that is in us*, says St. John, *than he that is in the World*, 1 Joh. 4. 4. And tho' we be *able to do nothing of our selves, as of our selves*; yet having the same Promise, we shall all be *enabled*, as St. Paul ^{2 Cor. 3. 5.} was, *To do all things thro' Christ that strengthens us*.

And as this possibility of keeping the Commandments, thro' our own Care and Pains, appears because God indispensibly requires and exhorts to it; and has promised his Holy Spirit and Grace, to enable all who duely labour after the same: So doth it yet farther,

3. Because good Men heretofore, and at this present time, do themselves find and experience it. Whensoever they wisely, and earnestly endeavour'd, and did

did not grow weary or faint, they always succeeded, and were enabled to have such regard to their whole Duty, as God required. The true Servants of God in all Ages, have been endow'd with so much strength as made them intire with God, and able to perform all that he would exact of them. *Caleb and Joshua followed the Lord wholly*, Numb. 32. 12. *David kept my Commandments*, saith God, *and followed me with all his heart*, 1 King. 14. 8. *Zachariah and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord blameless*, saith St. Luke, Luk. 1. 6. And what is so expressly said of all these, is by plain Intimation imply'd of all others. *They that are Christ's*, saith St. Paul, *have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*, Gal. 5. 24. *If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin*; i. e. Sin must have no more Service from it, than one would expect from a dead Man; *but the spirit is life, because of righteousness*, i. e. lives in righteous ways, Rom. 8. 10. *They who do iniquity, walk in his ways*, Psal. 119. 3.

Thus is it a constant thing in Scripture-account, and Relations; and so it was, and is still in all following Ages,
for

for God's faithful Servants to Experiment his Faithfulness in this grand Promise, and to be sufficiently assisted to do his Will, when they diligently and duly applied themselves to the doing of it. When they wisely and resolutely set themselves to it, and stuck to it, and call'd to him for help; he put to his Almighty Hand, and strengthened them, to accomplish what they attempted; and God's Promise is still the same to us, as it was to them, and he to the full, as inclinable, and as able to make it good; his Ear is not grown heavy that it cannot hear, nor his Arm short or feeble that it cannot help us. So that if we follow their Example, in wisely and faithfully endeavouring, we shall happily find their Success, in acceptably, and intirely obeying too.

Nay, I add further, as the good Experiment this Power in themselves, *viz.* Of doing their Duty thro' God's assistance, and evidence the same by their actual performance thereof; so likewise do all the bad confess it, by repenting where they fail. For there can be no Repentance for a Sin, where there was no possibility of avoiding it. All Repentance is a blaming of our selves; and no Man can

can accuse himself for want of Power, where he is not left to be his own Carver, but only for mis-use of it where he is. So that we can repent for nothing, but what, had we been wise and wary enough, our own Hearts tell us we might have done otherwise. If any Men then, in hopes to clear themselves, shall deny it in words; yet, whether they will or no, shall they all confess this Power in their Practice. When they do ill, they repent of it; and that shows, how by the Grace of God, they might have done better, since otherwise they could only be pitied, not blam'd and censur'd for what they did. I come now in the

3. And last place to show, that this performance is so far from being an impossible Task, that 'tis not extreme difficult, when Men set to it in earnest. By the Grace of God, and Care of pious Parents, several good Souls are train'd up as soon as may be, to the keeping of their Baptismal Innocence, and performance of their solemn Engagements. They are taught to know God, and to fear him, to know good and ill; and in reverence to God, to do the good, and refuse the ill, as soon as they are capable

ble of knowing any thing. Now here Religion grows up with them, and corrupt Passions and evil Customs (which are other Peoples great Complaints and Difficulties) are stifled and prevented from the first, and never come to grow Head-strong, or have any Power to reign in them. So that what Difficulties they have to find in Religion, are chiefly the Pains and Services of religious Actions; not those Self-denials, and Mortifications of corrupt Lusts and evil Habits, which create so much trouble to other Persons.

But the greatest part alas! have given way to their Lusts, and subjected themselves to wicked Customs; and their work is not retaining Innocence, but recovering it, and rectifying and amending Transgressions; now in amending our Lives, and obeying God after we have made our selves thus averse to his Obedience, there is difficulty and pains at first. Our former Courses and Customs generally must be alter'd, our Friends sometimes disobliged, our temporal Interest crossed and thwarted, and our natural Lusts formerly indulged, now gain-said and conquered. All this is against our inclination, which is a force upon
F any

any Man, and that while it lasts, will make an uneasiness in Religion. But to cure this, God's Grace will be working in us, and New-molding of our Natures; and by use we shall grow perfect and inclinable to the good things, which we set our selves to practise. So that after God's Grace, and our own vertuous Usage, have gone on for some due time, the Case will be altered, and Religion will appear not only a reasonable and beneficial, but likewise an agreeable thing. Divine Aids, and good Customs, will give us a new Sence of all our Duties, and make them almost always fairly tolerable, and usually delightful things. And thus our Lord encourages us to his Service. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for my yoke is easie and my burden light*, Matt. 11. 29, 30. And St. John speaking of keeping his Commandments; for our Comforts adds, that those Commandments are not grievous, 1 Joh. 5. 3.

This 'tis plain our Saviour says, but how, may some reply, doth it consist with sundry Severities and Strictnesses which his Law requires? For he enjoyns us to mortify our Lusts, the Painfulness whereof is express'd, *By cutting off right hands, and plucking out right eyes; to take*
up

up the cross, and patiently suffer persecutions; to watch and strive, and wrestle against spiritual enemies. These are all hard things, and where there are such Severities, and heavy Loads, how can we expect to find, I will not say delight; but easiness, since it seems strange to expect ease, under such uneasie Impositions?

But in answer to this I observe, that these and all such like places of Scripture, speak only either the Difficulties of Religion in some less common Cases, as Persecutions, in which the increase of Difficulty is so answered by a proportionable increase of Strength, as makes it a tolerable Task to encounter them: Or, the Hardships of it, at mens new entrance on it, after they had done much to unfit themselves for it; at which time, as I have said, it doth call for more Pains. Or lastly, such diligent and just Care, and Watchfulness afterwards, as admits of Comfort and Delight enough to sweeten it to us:

1. The hardest things spoken of Religion, concern it only in some less common Cases, as Persecutions. To this Case all those hard Sayings relate: *It is*

hardly possible for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: i. e. To turn Christian, which was punish'd with Confiscation of Goods at Jerusalem; and left the Disciples no other way of saving any thing, than by selling all, and having all things common; which in those days, and all others like them, was an extream Difficulty, call'd here an Impossibility, in the way of rich Men, Matt. 19. 23, 24. If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor; which refers I suppose to that particular time, and other succeeding times like it, when if he would adhere to Christ, a Man could not keep his Estate, Ver. 21. If any Man will come after me, he must take up his Cross, Matt. 16. 24. All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecutions, 2 Tim. 3. 12. He that will save his life, shall lose it, and he must be willing to lose it for my sake; that would expect to find it, Matt. 10. 39. All which strict Sayings, do not respect the ordinary course and state of Religion, but only its state in some certain Occurrences, which more seldom happen, and under great Persecutions, which were very hot in the first days; when as our Saviour told them, they could not be his Disciples, without forsaking

king houses and lands, and parents and brethren ; yea and their own lives also, Luk. 14. 26, 33.

But even in these Cases and suffering Times, when Religion enjoyns such hard things, yet are not they too hard for good Men ; the increase of Difficulty is so answered by a proportionable increase of Strength, as makes it no heavy, but a tolerable Imposition. For things are hard, or easie in relation to our Strength, according as we are more or less able to deal with them. What is hard to a Strippling, is easie to a grown Man ; and what would be an intolerable burden to an Infirmitie, is a very supportable Load, to an Healthy, and Athletick person. And in these suffering days, when God adds to our Task, he adds also to our Strength, so that we are still well able to go thro' with it. *When I am weak, says St. Paul, in distresses and persecutions of the flesh for Christ, then am I strong in Spirit to go thro' with them, 2 Cor. 12. 10. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us ; so proportionably our consolation aboundeth by Christ, 2 Cor. 1. 5.*

In extraordinary Tryals God is faithful, saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. 10. 13. and will afford extraordinary Assistances ;

2 Cor. 12.

10.

and then however hard their Case may be look'd upon by others, who see only at a distance, it will appear fairly tolerable and supportable; nay full of Comfort to themselves; as the numerous Army of Martyrs, and Confessors have comfortably experienced; who were enabled not only to bear, but as the Apostle says, ** To take pleasure in necessities and distresses, for Christ*; yea, who could sing, and sometimes rejoyce, and say, they felt no Pain even in the hottest Flames. So that take even Persecutions for God and a good Conscience; for any first, or second Table Duties, which seems the hardest Case; and the greatest Hardship in that is farthest off, and Men know least of it. But when good Men are call'd out to suffer for Righteousness sake, and adhere to their Duty inviolably, and rely on God, and intirely commit themselves to him in faithful discharge of the same, they find such Assistances of Grace, as renders them strong enough for what he calls them to; they cannot only bear, but thro' the rich supplies of spiritual Comforts, the Applause of a good Conscience, and the joyful prospect of a vast increase of future recompences, for their Surplusage
of

of present Sufferings, they can take pleasure and rejoyce therein; counting such Losses for a good Conscience, to be their greatest and truest Gain; and that God, instead of being hard upon them, is therein most kind, and beneficent to them.

2. Other Hardships attributed to Religion, concern only mens new Entrance upon it, after they have done much to unfit themselves for it, when indeed it requires more Pains. And to this we may refer all those Scriptures, which speak of *cutting off right hands, and plucking out right eyes*, i. e. Casting away all evil Habits and Inclinations which are very near and dear to us, *Matt. 5. 29, 30. Of mortifying our members, which are upon the earth, Col. 3. 5.* and the like.

These are Difficulties at our first Entrance on the Amendment of evil Courses, for then we throw off all sinful Lusts and Inclinations. It is very painful at the first, but use makes it easier afterwards. Custom rectifies our Inclinations, and begets a new Nature, and reconciles us to those things, whereto we were very averse before, so that the Hardship which these make in Religion, is only when we begin the work of Repentance and A-

ment. And tho' it be harder then ; yet even at that time it is a toleable thing. It employs our Strength, but it doth not exceed it. For when we do a little; God still enables us to do more, and so carries us on by degrees, till at last we have Strength enough to Conquer. And as we grow stronger, our Duty grows easier, till it advances at least beyond an ease, into a pleasure. So that this Difficulty is both tolerable while it continues, and besides it is soon over.

3. Other places of Scripture, denoting the Hardships of Religion, express only such diligent and just Care and Watchfulness thro' our whole Course, as admits of Comfort and Delight enough to sweeten it to us. And to this we may refer those Texts which require us *to watch*, Mark 13. 37. And to *give* *all diligence*, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 10. To ** strive*, and *† labour*, and the like. Religion is not the effect of doing nothing, nor eternal Life a prize that can be gain'd by lazy careless Men. It requires Pains in all at first, yea much and great Pains in those who have once corrupted themselves, by contrary Lusts, and wicked Customs: And it also requires a constant

* Luk. 13.

24.

† Heb. 4.

11.

stant Care and Watchfulness for ever afterwards. But this Care and Labour is moderate. It fairly comports, not only with the necessary business, but also with the prudent, convenient and moderate Diversions, and Entertainments of this Life, so that our minding it will not force us to neglect our outward Comforts. It is reasonable in degrees, not holding us up at the utmost stretch of our Faculties: But will do our work, if it do but equal our Care and Pains, for the Interests and Enjoyments of this World, which Pains Men are very well content to take without ever complaining of the Hardships of them. For if we are any thing near so intent upon doing our Duty, as ordinarily we are upon the getting an Estate, and will watch the Opportunities of doing good, as we do of growing rich or great; it will abundantly suffice for it. And besides, as this Labour of Vertue, is in it self very moderate; so has it many Accessory Comforts, and Considerations, which greatly sweeten and recommend it to us. It gives us at present the Applause of a good Conscience, and makes us pleas'd and satisfied with our selves, and cherishes our heart, with the joyful
hope

hope of eternal Life and Happiness. And when all the Pains we take is so pleasing to our selves, and with this prospect, it will not only be found an ease, but a delight too.

And thus I have endeavour'd from these words, to assert this great and necessary Encouragement to all attempts in Religion, *viz.* That by the Grace of Christ enabling them, Men shall be sure to succeed in them, if they are not wanting in themselves. And that when Men continue wicked, and say, they cannot help it, they urge a shameful and very false Pretence. And the sum of what I have urged against this Plea is this; They generally complain most of the Impossibility of obeying God, who least endeavour to obey him; or who endeavour wrong, without using those fit means, whereby they should become obedient; or when they use right means, endeavour but by halves, and do not go thro' with their Endeavours; whereas would they endeavour diligently, and discreetly, and incessantly for this Obedience, as they do for other things, they might be sure to succeed, because God commands and exhorts them to it, and promises by his Grace to help them therein;

therein ; and good Men, who have endeavoured thus, either now or heretofore, have actually by such Endeavours, perform'd the same. Nay, if they will be persuaded to make the Experiment, they will find it is not only a possible, but after some time at least, an agreeable Service : And that in all the parts of it, it is a tolerable, in most an easie ; and in many, a most pleasurable and delightful thing.

God grant, that as by his Grace assisting us, we have all the Power ; so we may likewise have the Will and Heart to make a right use thereof ; and accomplish that Obedience, which he so sincerely and earnestly desires we should ; and will most gladly enable us upon our honest Endeavours to perform.

DISCOURSE III.

How to form such a Purpose of sincere Repentance, and entire Obedience, as will be effectual for this Purpose.

On Acts 11. 23. And exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord.

WHEN some of those Christians, who were dispers'd abroad, upon the Death of St. Stephen, came to *Antioch*, and upon their Preaching, *Multitudes* believed; the *Church of Jerusalem* sent out *Barnabas*, that he should go and confirm them in the new Course of Life which they had undertaken, and in the Holy Faith which they had received; and this he doth in the words of the Text; *Who when he came and had seen the Grace*
of

of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, &c.

By cleaving to the Lord, we may understand, not only adhering to God, and the Christian Religion, in opposition to the Jewish Worship, and to all false Gods, and Heathen Idols; a Point very necessary to be pressed, when they sought Converts, among *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

Not only adhering to Gospel-Truths, when they grow hazardous, a thing very requisite to be inculcated under approaching Tryals, and in difficult Times: But also adhering to him in Vertue and Holiness in opposition to a wicked Life; a thing most indispensibly required, and fit to be studiously urged in all times.

In adhering thus to God in a virtuous Course, we shall meet with many Difficulties, and be put to deny our selves, and very likely others too, whom either out of some temporal Expectation, or Affection, we gladly would comply withal; and this is enough to stagger our Choice, and to draw our hearts off from God, unless they are fully bent upon his ways, and knit to him by a fix'd Resolution and steady Purpose of Obedience. And that the Apostle calls for in this place, from those who were engaged

engaged in, and would go on with God's Service ; *He exhorted them all that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord.*

My design from these words is to shew, how to form such a Resolution of new Life, and penitential Purpose, as may both set us in, and also carry us thro' with God's Service ; and this may seem most necessary to be insisted on, because the far greatest part of penitential Purposes fall off before they have wrought an answerable Practice. So that 'tis highly useful to inquire what are their Defects, and how in a Point of such eternal moment, we may prevent miscarriages.

It is not all Holy Resolution, that will overcome our Lusts, and keep us true to our Maker against all Temptations. If it is weak or wavering, the Sollicitations of our old Friends will quickly alter, or the strength of great Temptations over-power it. If it is chiefly for remote Futurities, and over-looks what is next at hand, it will allow us to be wicked for the present. If it be made only in a good Mood, and the absence of Temptations, it will not bear us out when we come under them. If it were
rash

rash and hasty, without a due Foresight and Consideration both of the Duties and the Difficulties which we resolv'd upon, it will be quash'd, when Hardships come that were not expected: If this Resolution is too indulgent about Means and Expediencies, and not strict enough against all occasions of Sin; it leaves open a Back-door to let in many damnable Offences; and on the other side, if it is indiscreetly rigorous in these Points, it will prove a snare to us; if it is only a transient Act, and is not frequently repeated, and renewed again, in a little time it will pass off from us. A Resolution of Amendment may prove ineffective, and miscarry upon all these Grounds; as is daily seen in the good Purposes of awakened Sinners, which are ever and anon rais'd in them by Sickness or some affecting Providence, but vanish and come to nothing, ere they have wrought the Reformation, which they were designed for.

When our Consciences are awakened then, with a frightful sense of our Sins, and we think seriously of reforming, and leading new Lives, great Care must be taken so to fix the bent of our hearts, and to form such a penitential Purpose,

as

as may take effect, and bear us out in performing what we have design'd. And this I think will be well provided for, in these Particulars.

First, Our Resolution of a new Life must be considerate, and well advis'd.

Secondly, It must be without all reserve full and perfect.

Thirdly, It must be adequate to all times; or a Resolution to forsake Sin; not only hereafter, but instantly, and now at present; not only when we are out of Temptations, but also when we are under them; not only when we cannot Act our Sins, but also when we can Act and repeat them too.

Fourthly, It must not only be upon the Duties, but also upon the means and helps of Duty; not only against the Sins; but against the Inducements and Occasions, that lead to Sin likewise. And that being once well form'd, it may never wear off, but last thro' all times:

Fifthly, It must not only be a transient Act, but oftentimes repeated, and renewed thro' our whole Lives:

1. To form such a Resolution of a new Life as may be like to take effect;

it must not be a rash and indeliberate Act, but well advis'd and considerate.

When some extraordinary Providences, as great Losses and Dangers, or severe Smart and Sicknes, have awakened mens Consciences, and fill'd them with a great and painful Dread of God's deserved Wrath; to cure that Dread they resolve without more ado, to please him by a good Life; never considering what that is, or what Pains it costs, or whether it may not prove such a Remedy, as afterwards they will finde worse than the Disease it self. And when they are thus rash and unadvised in resolving on it, they quickly repent of such Resolutions, when they find it worse than they imagin'd, and meet with Hardships which they never expected.

To prevent this Sickliness in our Resolutions of a good Life, then it is necessary, that we view and consider it well, what it is, and what Pains it requires, before we make them, and look on all sides to see, both what may discourage us from, and what may move us to them. And this our Saviour has plainly directed in two Similitudes; that of a *Builder*, who before he begins, considers whether he hath enough to finish;

nish; and that of a *King making War*, who first consults, whether he is strong enough at least to defend himself, if not to conquer; for speaking to those, who seemed desirous to become his Disciples, he instructs them first to consider, what they are going to undertake, in these two Parables. *Which of you*, says he, *intending to build a Tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Or what King going to War, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand*; so that he may proceed not to fight, but seek a Peace, if he find his Numbers are in that Disproportion; *Luk. 14. 28, 31.*

Thus when we resolve upon a good Life, if we would have that Resolution take effect, we must consider and weigh well what we do before we make it: We must bethink our selves, and attently view, what that good Life is which we resolve upon; and also what reason we have to resolve upon it; and when we have thus considered all before, there is the less cause to fear, that any thing which we meet withal afterwards, should make us alter, or recede from it.

We must bethink our selves and consider, what that good Life is which we resolve upon. It is not enough that we resolve in the general to be good, but in our thoughts we must survey the particular Instances of Goodness, that so, if we stick at any of them, we may give it all its weight at first; and that after we have once resolved, it may not cause us to start back from it. When we return to God then, to live as he has requir'd, we must run over the several Duties wherein we stand bound to God, our Neighbour and our selves, and observing all the Particulars, ask our selves, whether we are willing to perform all of them for his sake. And if we resolve to do them, after we have taken such particular notice of them, this Resolution is like to do some good, and we may expect the desired Effect from it. And when we have thus seriously considered, what a good Life is, we must next consider what great Reason we have to resolve upon it, and what those things are, which may either discourage us from it, or excite us to it. To Discourse particularly upon these, would of it self be sufficient, for a Sermon; and therefore upon this Point, I shall barely mention them.

As

As for the Difficulties which may discourage us, they are such as these. When we enter upon a good Life, we engage in a Course, wherein for some time, till Use has made us Masters of it, we must undergo the Toil of Inexpertness, and Act contrary to our former Customs, and lay Restraint upon our natural Inclinations, and contend daily against the importunity of Temptations, and sometimes, it may be, lose our Friends, and disserve our temporal Interests; all which are uneasie, and discouraging Considerations.

Indeed, if by the Earliness of his Conversion, and by the Advantages of his Place and Station (his Lot being cast in innocent Employments, and among good Men) and by the vertuous bent of his natural Temper and Complexion, (an invaluable Gift, which God bestows on some Persons) a man's Soul is originally disposed, and timely secured to Holiness; he will find little trouble in these things, nor be much pain'd, or hindred by them, from the first entrance. And if he has not been blest, in all these Particulars, to take off all Hardship from the first, yet will he have this to mitigate, and sweeten all the Labour, which

he lays out upon them ; the Toil he undergoes is for the sake of one, who has endured far more for him, and infinitely deserved it of him ; and if there is no want in his Endeavour, by the help of God he shall be sure to conquer them ; and to reap a present Content of Mind, and Peace of Conscience after every Conflict with them, and in the end to gain the everlasting Joys of Heaven by them. And when he has been used to them a little while, Use will take off all the Hardship ; and then, instead of being burden'd by the ungrateful Duties, he shall begin to like them, and take a Pleasure therein. All which are great Abate-ments of the foresaid Difficulties, and very encouraging.

But let a good Life be difficult and uneasie as it will, when Hell-fire is threatned to a wicked Life, that sure is incomparably more difficult ; and a reason for us to resolve to be good beyond all Contradiction. For if the sight of Pain must discourage us from any Course, I am sure Hell-fire has infinitely the most of it ; and if Ease and Happiness may be any Inducement, the Ease and Happiness of Heaven, can never in any degree be equall'd ; so that if we seriously
con-

consider, and look upon eternal Torment as inseparably annexed to every Sin; and on endless Joys as the sure Reward of our being intirely obedient; they are an answer to all Temptations in the World, and bear down every opposite Argument, and will make us resolve to lead a Holy Life, be the Difficulties or Discouragements that attend it what they will.

Thus must our penitential Purpose be no rash and sudden Act, but deliberate and well advis'd; when we resolve to lead a Holy Life, we must seriously consider with our selves what an Holy Life implies, and what reason we have to resolve upon it; attently viewing, both what may discourage us from it, and also what, notwithstanding that Discouragement, may and will induce us to it.

2. The Second Qualification of a penitential Purpose is, that it must be without all reserve full and perfect.

When we resolve to amend our Lives, and become good, we must not except any Duties, for God excepts none, nor reserve to our selves an allowance of any Sins, for God forbids, and most severely punishes all sorts of Sin. Our Resolution must know no other Limits but

our Duty, and extend to every thing which God has required of us. And this compass of religious Purpose the Commandment expressly calls for, when we are enjoyn'd to *love God with all our hearts*, Luk. 10. 27. For if we keep a secret Reserve for any sin, our heart is given but by halves to God, and is not whole with him. *Jehu walk'd not in the law of God with all his heart*, says the Scripture, and the Proof is given, because he had a Reserve in one Point, and *departed not from the sins of Jeroboam*, 2 Kings 10. 31. but *David*, says God, *followed me with all his heart*; which appear'd, because *he did that only which is right in mine eyes*, 1 Kings 14. 18. and what is said in this Case, the Psalmist expresses more universally of all others, *They seek the Lord with their whole heart, who do no iniquity*, Plal. 119. 2, 3.

Thus must our penitential Purposes be full and intire with God, not sticking at any thing he has enjoyn'd, nor allowing of any thing his Law forbids us; and therefore, those Resolvers must not think they have finish'd, but only begun the Work, who have not renounc'd all, but only the greatest part, and still reserve themselves for some particular Sins; which
are

are deep rooted in their natural Tem-
pers, or closely interwoven with their
way of Life and Business; yea, or for
some particular Times, and Acts of any
Sin, resolving against it in all Cases, save
only when 'tis powerfully recommended
by some great Temptations; whilst they
resolve thus by halves, they must needs
perform and obey by halves too.

3. A Third Qualification of a peni-
tential purpose, is, that it be adequate
to all times, or a Resolution to forsake
sin, not only hereafter, but instantly and
now at present; not only when we are
out of Temptations, but also when we
are under them; not only when we can-
not act them, but also when we can act
and repeat them too.

1. It must be a Resolution to forsake
sin, not only hereafter, but instantly and
now at present. When mens Consciences
are affrighted with the sense of their Sins,
and are made to see the Necessity of Re-
pentance; yet thinking that they may
repent at any time, and desiring to en-
joy the Pleasures of Sin as long as they
can, to please their Lusts, they will ven-
ture to sin on for some time, and to please
God too in the end; resolve afterwards
to repent of them. They will fulfill
their

their wicked Lusts while they are in Health, and amend when they come upon their Sick-beds ; they will enjoy all the Liberties of Vice in the vigorous days of Youth, and grow severely virtuous when they are bowed down by the infirmities of Old Age. Or if they are afraid to defer the Work of Reformation so long, lest in the mean time Death prevent them ; yet will they venture still to put it off a little longer, and not set about it suddenly, but delay it till the next Sacrament, or till some solemn time come.

But now as to this Dilatoriness in mens penitential Purposes ; so far is it from being an Act of true Repentance, that indeed 'tis only an Art and Subterfuge for mens impenitence. For whilst we resolve only to repent hereafter, 'tis plain we intend to continue wicked still at present ; nay what is more, we are in very great Danger, when that future time is come, to continue wicked then also. For if we delay it till Death or Sicknes seize us, in all likelihood, we shall neither have Time, nor Power for it. And if we put it off till Old Age, we shall then have far greater Difficulties, and much less Strength to set about it. Nay, if we de-
fer

ferr it to any time yet absent, besides our dying in the mean Season, which may prevent our doing what we intend, we shall find as great, or greater Hindrances then, than we do now.

If we delay it, I say, till Death and Sickness seize us, in all likelihood we shall have neither Time nor Power for it. Indeed, if God so please he can work Repentance in us, when there is the least time for it, and by the power of his Almighty Spirit, both begin and finish the Change in us in an instant. And that Men may not quite despair in any State; one Case we have upon Record, wherein he did thus, and that was in the *Thief upon the Cross*, who was reclaimed and converted to God, at the last moment, *Luk. 23. 43.* So that there is no prescribing to the Power of God, when he is willing to employ it in extraordinary Favours, and work Wonders in reclaiming, and regenerating us all at once; whereas his ordinary way is to do it by more leisurely and gradual Motions.

But whatever there may be in those rare Cases, wherein God works by unwonted and extraordinary Grace; yet according to ordinary Rules, and the Course of things, we are not likely to have

have either Time or Power sufficient to repent, if we delay it till our Death-beds. The Alteration of a whole Life, and long Course of Sin, requires much Time, and a vigorous and diligent Application; for ordinarily we cannot retrench our sinful Habits, but by an opposite Course and Usage; we cannot turn the Byass of our Natures, and the Bent of our corrupt Inclinations, but by strong and frequent Exercise; the Duties which we are to perform, are very numerous in Particulars, and in the ordinary way we cannot attain, and become habitually inclinable almost to any one, till after many Actions and repeated Tryals. When we have a whole Life to alter and reform; and must mortify many natural Lusts, and root out many habitual Sins, and acquire as many Vertues, which are not only very uncouth, but opposite and repugnant to our Inclinations; we have a long and studious Work that lies upon us, and that requires both much Time, and much Freedom, and Fitness in all our Faculties; and how can we expect that upon our Death-bed? For then our Time is short, and all our Faculties enfeebled and oppressed, which utterly unfits them

to be held either much or long employ'd ; so that if we delay our Repentance till Death seize us, in all probability we shall never thorowly repent at all.

Again, if we delay our Repentance till Old Age, we shall have then, far greater Difficulties, and much less Strength to set about it.

The Difficulty which we have to conquer will then be greater. For by our continuance in sin, all those things are strengthned and confirm'd, which make our return difficult ; for all our sinful Habits are confirm'd by Practice, and all our natural Lusts are heightned by Indulgence ; so that our continuance doth nothing else but add to the Disease, and make it harder to be cured afterwards.

And as it heightens the Difficulties, so it impairs our Aids, and leaves us much less Strength to set about Amendment. For by every Repetition of an evil Action, our Conscience of its guilt is the more extinguish'd, and the good Spirit of God is the more alienated from us, and provok'd the more to withdraw himself, and abandon us ; and our own Conscience, and God's Grace, are the very things, which must recover us out of our sinful State, if ever we do reco-

ver

ver out of it : So that to deferr repenting to Old Age, is only to put it off, till we have contracted the greatest spiritual Impotence, and till sin is grown most strong and potent in us ; which is not the way to reclaim us from, but to secure us fast in Wickedness.

Nay, if we would not deferr repenting, till our Death-bed, nor till we are grown old, but only till the next Sacrament, or some other time yet distant ; yet even of this delay I must observe, that besides our dying in the mean Season, which may prevent our doing what we intend, if we put it off to any time beyond the present, we shall find as great or greater Hindrances then, than we do now ; for that which hinders us from an actual Reformation now, is only the uneasiness of the Work ; and if we take time only to sin more, that, as I have observ'd, is the way to increase that uneasiness, but not at all to lessen or abate it. We have no Exception against the present time, but only because it is present, and because we would have difficult things always future, and far distant from us ; and that Exception will lie equally against all other times, when they come to be present too. Nay, 'twill
lie

lie against them much more; because the longer we put off this difficult work, the harder will it be at last when we come to it; the Hardships daily growing upon our hands, and encreasing by continuance in a Course of Wickedness. So that when by reason of the Difficulty of an entire Reformation; Men deserr it to a distant time, they will find to their Cost, when that time comes, that the same Difficulties are still in force; yea, have more added to them, to make them delay it, yet a little longer; and that which hindred them at first; if it be acknowledg'd a sufficient hindrance, will equally, nay, much more hinder them, for ever after. And this *St. Austin* ingeniously confesses he found.

** When I delay'd repenting, says he, I said yet a little while, and then again a little while, and then I will repent: till at last I found, if I gave way to these little whiles, they would be infinite and last always.*

** Differens dicebam, modo, ecce modo, sine paululum; sed modo & modo, non habebant modum.*

Thus if Men would repent in earnest, and have their holy Purposes take any good Effects, they must resolve to do it out of hand, and not delay it till their Sick-bed, or some other time yet distant.

They

They are too late in all reason to have a work of that necessity and importance yet to begin ; and they may well be the farther from it, but cannot expect to be more able or likely to begin it at another Season. The present time is only that which they can call their own, and that wherein they are like to go on most easily, and surely with the work of Reformation. So that when they resolve to repent, the only wise Course is to resolve to do it instantly, and use no delays at all.

But besides this, That our penitential Purpose must not only be to repent at some time hereafter, but instantly now at present : It is necessary,

2. That it be made against our Sins, not only when we are out of Temptations, but also when we are under them : Not only when we cannot Act them, but also when we can act and repeat them too.

Some Men are very zealous against their Sins, whilst they have no Temptation to them ; but their Indignation is quite cold, and all their Resentment is laid aside, when once they have. They are never angry with them, but when they are at a distance, and are melted down again into Love and Compliance,
when

when once they come to a second Meeting. Their holy Purposes are not owing to any strength of their virtuous Convictions, but only to the absence of sinful Inducements ; so that as soon as they return upon them, they are altogether the same Men, as unresolved, and unreclaimed as they were before.

And others are firmly set against some Sins only, whilst they are incapacitated for them ; but instantly revolt, when they are able, and prepared to return to them again. A fit of sickness has cool'd the flames of Lust, or dull'd the edge of Appetite ; and whilst they are in this impotent Estate, they can easily resolve against Intemperance and Uncleaness ; because they are not fit to undergo them, nor can take any pleasure in them ; but if once their bodily Indisposition is amended, having recovered to the same Desires, they are set as much upon the same Practices as ever. Their good Resolution was owing only to the weakness of Nature, and so vanishes in Course, when it becomes vigorous and strong again.

But a good Resolution is made for the hour of Temptation ; it is to be our strength and guard, and is then most
H especi-

especially to be put on, when our Virtue is assaulted, and we have the greatest need of it. So that we must not only put on Resolutions, whilst Dangers are at a distance, but most of all, when they are near at hand, and ready to assail us.

Besides these Qualifications of a penitential Purpose hitherto insisted on, there remain two more, which I recited at first, and which I have not time now to explain, and can do little more than mention.

4. In the Fourth place then our penitential Purpose and Resolution of new Life, must not only be upon the Duties, but also upon the Means and Helps; and not only against the Sins, but against the Occasions and Inducements to Sin likewise.

The neglect of this resolving upon fit Means and Helps of living well; and against the Occasions of doing ill, makes as many good Resolutions miscarry, I believe, as any other thing whatsoever. For under some great Convictions, and fright of Mind, Men resolve to be good; but at the same time, they are not careful to resolve upon the right way and means of being so: They do not resolve
in

in order to it, to store their Minds with clear Apprehensions of all particular Duties; to think much of Heaven and Hell, Death and Judgment, and other Motives to Obedience; to make choice of religious Companions, who will cherish in them a sense of good things; to shew care in keeping out of Temptation, and Watchfulness, and Circumspection, when they are under them; and call themselves daily to an account of their miscarriages; and be instant in Prayers for God's Grace; and to use other wise Means and Expedients, which may enable them to accomplish what they design, and effectually perform that good Life which they resolve upon; and for want of resolving thus wisely upon the Means, as well as upon the End, all those good Beginnings and holy Purposes fall to nothing. For a Man may as well resolve to be Rich, without resolving to mind his Business, or resolve to be learn'd, without a diligent Application to his Studies; as resolve to be Good, without resolving also upon the right way, and means of attaining Goodness. A bare resolution of it will not do the work; for we must not only firmly resolve, but wisely endeavour it too.

And when we have thus considerately resolv'd to lead new Lives, and have resolved it without reserve in all Points ; and that too in all times, both at present, and for the future, in Temptations and out of them ; and that upon the Means, as well as upon the Duties, and against the Occasions, as well as against the Sins : When our penitential Purpose, I say, is thus qualified in all these Particulars, to make it strong and persevering in all times, we must take care,

5thly, That it be not only a transient Act ; but oftentimes repeated and renewed through our whole Lives.

As for the frequency of this renewal ; there can be no fix'd Bounds set to all Tempers and States of Penitents, but that must be determin'd by the measure of their Zeal for God ; and the Necessities of their own Souls. When at any time they relapse into any wilful Sin, they must renew their Resolution particularly against it, before they come to ask Pardon for it ; because God will not pardon any wilful Sin, till we have particularly repented of it. And when they come to the Holy Sacrament, which is a renewal of the whole Baptifmal Covenant ; it may

may be very fit and adviseable, that at some times through all their Lives, but much oftner whilst their Falls are more frequent, and their State more doubtful, they renew their Vows and penitential Engagements upon all the particular Heads of Duty, and against all known Sins whatsoever. And to be prepared every day, against the Sins, which they are liable to incur in the constant Course of Life and Conversation; they may do well to repeat their Resolutions against all probable Temptations of that day every Morning, and lay wait for the Opportunities of performing them in the day-time, and take a strict account of their Faculties or Performances every night. And if Repentance is thus made a design'd work, and turn'd into a daily business; it will be like to go on well, and prosper in our hands. We are still supplying it, where it wants, and renewing it where it fails, and fortifying it where it begins to falter. And if we persevere in this Course, and proceed in it, not only now and then by Fits, but always; we shall be in no danger of relapsing, but continue Penitents, to our Lives-end. *Which God of his great Mercy grant, &c.*

and be very in and accessible, and as
some times through all their lives, but
with other while their fall is
regiment, and their state more solemn
they throw their voice and passion
in the way of all the particular
interests of the state, and in the
and whatever, and to be organized
every day, against the day, which they
are made to do, in the constant course
of the and Convention, they may do
well to trust their Religion against
all possible temptations of that day
every morning, and try what for the
opportunities of performing them in the
of time, and like a good account of
their facilities of performance every
night. And if the opportunity is thus made
of the work, and that into a daily
habit, it will be like to go on well,
and in the end, we are all
in the way, when it comes and every-
thing is done, and everything is
done, and everything is done. And if we
are in the way, and everything is done
in the way, and everything is done, but
we are in the way, and everything is done
in the way, and everything is done, and
we are in the way, and everything is done

DISCOURSE IV.

How to take the truest Wisdom of
Worldly Men in their Manage-
ments, and apply it with ad-
mirable Use and Advantage in
the Improvement and Perfection
of Holy Obedience.

*On Luk. 16. 8. For the Children of
this World are wiser in their Gene-
ration, than the Children of Light.*

THIS is our Blessed Saviour's re-
flection on the *unjust Stewards*
fore-cast, and provision for his
present State. When he had
lost the favour of his Lord, he seeks
how to make Friends among his Te-
nants, that they may receive him into
their Houses, when he is cast out of his
Lord's Service. Now tho' he is to be

blamed for his injustice and dishonesty, yet the Lord commends him for his prudence and forecast, or for that in his way, or in the way of Worldly Men, *he had done wisely*, v. 8.

And this he observes is not peculiar to him, but is common to the Children of this World. Tho' they are not careful more than the unjust Steward was, of innocence and honesty; yet they are wise in their worldly Managements, yea *wiser in their Generation, than the Children of Light are in theirs*. And tho' we are to leave their injustice with them; yet our Blessed Lord would have us learn Wisdom of Management from them.

In Discourſing upon theſe words, I ſhall ſhew,

First, Who are the *Children of this World*, and who are the *Children of Light*.

Secondly, What it is for the *Children of this World*, to be *wiser in their Generation*.

Thirdly, Note thoſe things, wherein their foresight and diſcretion is more particularly imitable; and wherein we may and ought to learn Wiſdom from them.

1. I shall show, who are *the Children of this World*, and who are *the Children of Light*.

The *Children of this World*, are they who give themselves up to mind worldly Ends and Matters, and pursue them by worldly Rules and Managements, not regarding the Innocence, more than the unjust Steward did, but only the Serviceableness and Expedience of them.

The *Children of Light* are they, who profess to walk in Belief and Obedience, to the Religion and Commands of Jesus Christ. *Whatsoever doth make manifest, saith the Apostle, is Light*, Eph. 5. 13. And our Blessed Lord is come to manifest to us, all the Will of God, and the way to Heaven, and therefore calls himself *the Light*, Joh. 8. 12. and chap. 9. 5. and 1. 7. and all who give themselves up to follow and obey him, to believe his Doctrine, and to walk in this way which he discovers and prescribes to us, are the *Children of Light*.

2. What it is for *the Children of this World*, to be wiser *in their Generation*.

Now their Generation, is that Age or
Time

Time wherein they live; and those Men of that Time, of like Ends, Professions and Managements, with themselves amongst whom they live. And their being wiser in their Generation than the Children of Light are in theirs, is their managing their several worldly Ends, and Professions among one another in their time, with more true Forecast, and Wisdom, than Christians in their day are wont to manage their Profession, of paying their Services, and all Holy Obedience unto Jesus Christ, or of doing their Duty in all Points unto him. I come now,

3. Which is the main Point I am to insist upon from these Words, To note those things, wherein the Forecast and Discretion of worldly Men, is more particularly imitable by us, and wherein we may and ought to learn Wisdom from them. And this I shall note in these following Particulars.

1. 'Tis one part of their Wisdom, that they fix to themselves some certain End, and so act not loosely, and by chance, but have a certain mark to aim at.

2. That when they have once fix'd their End, they openly own and profess it.

3. That

3. That they are particularly careful, to be well skill'd in, and thorowly to understand all the Parts and Offices belonging to their Occupation or Profession.

4. That having thus fix'd themselves upon their End, and made that their Profession, it is the constant mark in their Eye, and daily Care and Employment of their Life, and they are still vigorously intending and driving it on.

5. That they carefully and timely foresee, and provide for Futurities, so as that nothing may be wanting to set on this End and Profession, or fall out to its prejudice.

6. That they are ready to cast off any other Cares or Concerns, when they either find, or foresee they are like to prove Impediments or Incumbrances to their main business.

7. They are studious and observant, to direct all Accidents and Occurrences, and cast about how they may pick out, any advantage from them, or make them serviceable, to their own great Purpose.

8. When any thing is propos'd to them, their Eye falls in the first place upon their chief End, and they either accept or refuse the same, according as
it

it may be like to serve, or disserve them in their Prosecution or Attainment thereof.

9. They are jealous of their great End, and examine nicely, and are very difficultly brought to give way to any thing, that seems to bear any colour, or may in any likelihood turn to its prejudice.

10. They are very active and industrious to engage Succours, where they are needful to their great Purposes.

1. One Point of the Wisdom of the Children of this World, very fit for us to imitate and learn from them, is this, That they fix to themselves some certain End, and so act not loosely, and by chance, but have a certain mark to aim at. Each one proposes some particular thing or other to himself; so that his Actions are not loose, and without a steady Aim, but he has every day a fix'd Point, whereto to direct them. One sets up for Pleasure, another for Power, a third for Profit, but generally all of them for one thing or other; and this makes some order and coherence in Life; their Actions are not loose, or unrelated to each other, but a second backs and promotes

promotes the former, and all concur to carry on, and compass the End which is fix'd for them.

. Now this Point of their Wisdom, is very fit to be imitated by the *Children of Light*. Not that they must propose to themselves wrong Aims like them. Either such as are ill, or low and mean ones, which will be offensive to God, and unworthy of themselves, and no ways fit to recompence the Pains which they lay out upon them. But, as they do, Christians must fix to themselves some End. They must not live in their way as unthinking Men, who have no design, and whose Actions are altogether uncertain, carried about here or there, as Chance occasions, or undirected and govern'd Fancy, or the Humour calls them. But they must always propose some spiritual Aims to themselves, and fix their mark, whereto they are to steer their Course; and to direct their Labours and Endeavours.

And this Mark, in one word, is their doing their Duty to their Blessed Lord in all Points, and at all Times, which is the only way to please God, and to preserve a good Conscience, and to love their precious and immortal Souls. This

is

is the End which they are to fix themselves upon, who *profess to have here no abiding City, but to seek one to come*, Heb. 13. 14. who have renounced this World, and *laid up their Treasures in Heaven*, Matt. 6. 20. who *look for the glorious Appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and would be accepted by him at his coming, Tit. 2. 13.

2. Another Point of their Wisdom is, that when once they have fix'd their End, they openly own and profess it. They espouse the same in the Face of all, by making it their Trade, their Occupation, their Employment in the World. And this way they do more publicly engage themselves, to be careful and constant in the Prosecution thereof, and bespeak the Favour of all their Friends and Well-wishers, who may be in any Capacity, to help and further them therein.

And this 'tis very fit the Children of Light should learn from them. They must not conceal and smother the Service which they bear to their Ever-blessed Saviour, but be ready to make it known, and turn it into a free and avow'd Profession. They must, as occasion serves, give all to understand that God is their
great

great Fear, and that doing their Duty at all times towards him is, and shall be their chief Profession and Care: And this way they will strongly and openly have engaged themselves ever after, to make good their own religious Pretences; and put a timely check upon ill Men, not to tempt them with any ill thing; nor to speak, nor do any thing offensive to God, or to a good Mind, if they expect to keep them Company.

And this we are call'd to, when we are call'd together *in one Body*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. Rom. 12. 5. For that is to make open and united Profession of it, as a visible Society. And when we are bid *to let our Light shine before Men*, Matt. 5. 16. *To own our Saviour Christ and his Laws, in an evil and adulterous Generation*, Mar. 8. 38. *And with the mouth to make Confession to Salvation*, Rom. 10. 10.

3. Another is, that they are particularly careful, to be well skill'd in, and thorowly to understand all the Parts and Offices belonging to their Occupation or Profession. A Man may be ignorant of some things without blame; and the Ignorance of others may deserve Commendation. For 'tis both a part of Innocence, and a Guard to it, to be ignorant of

of the Ways of doing ill. And 'tis a means of his Quiet to be ignorant of other mens Affairs; and not busily inquisitive into their Matters. And 'tis a sign of the well-employ'd to be ignorant of trifles and empty things. But 'tis a shame for any Man to be ignorant of what he professes; for that is to be at a loss in his own business. And this all Men are thorowly apprehensive of; and therefore all Trades serve Apprenticeships, and are train'd up for several years, to be thorowly skill'd in all the parts of the Occupation which they profess; yea, even the ordinary Husband-man, knows very well how to order and manage his Ground, when to Plow, and when to Sow, and when to Reap; and what are the fittest and properest Seasons for the Market. However ignorant they may be in other things, they are careful to know their own Business, and Professions, and to be well skill'd, so as to need no Teachers in their own Employments.

And this is a most especial instance of Wisdom, which it necessarily behoves the Children of Light to learn from them. For one of the first things, and of the most necessary in the way of a Christian Man to Heaven, is to be thorowly

rowly instructed in all those things, which God has made Articles of his Salvation. If he must at last be judged by them, it is absolutely necessary that he set himself in the mean time carefully to observe them. And if he must observe them, he must first know them; yea, and have them made familiar to his Conscience, so that it may readily remind him of them, as oft as any Opportunities occur in course of Life, for him either to keep, or break them. This knowledge of every particular Duty, which is to be a matter of our final Account; as it is of prime necessity and singular advantage, so will it cost pains and labour to attain it. But I know not how any truly good, and sincerely pious Minds, can employ themselves better. They must read good Books, where the Catalogues of such Duties are most particularly recited and explain'd; and the particular necessity of our Observance of them, (that we may give up a good Account at the great Day,) is shewn most particularly from the Holy Scriptures. And these they must read attentively and often, till they have made themselves Masters of them, and their Consciences are ready upon any occasi-

on to remind them thereof, as they are call'd at any time to observe them in the Course of Conversation; and when their Conscience doth thus remind them of any of them in Conversation, let them by no means take off their Eye from what their Conscience tells them, is a matter of their final Account; and instead thereof, follow the Practice of other Men, it may be, reputed good, or Men of Note Knowledge and Understanding. For tho' 'tis a sad Reflection, yet 'tis a very true one, that Numbers of Christians, and those too of Note and Eminence for Piety and Understanding, seem in their daily Converse, to make no Account at all, of a great number of those Duties, which God has declared, he will call us all to a strict Account for. And therefore having themselves happily attain'd this particular Knowledge of all necessary Duties, let them stick to their own knowledge on every occasion, and follow it without disputing; and not once think of leaving the same, to follow the general neglect of many of these things, which he may every where observe in other Men.

And this we are call'd to in Scripture, when we are bid, *To understand what the will*

will of the Lord is, Eph. 5. 17. To be men in understanding; 1 Cor. 14. 20. To give all diligence to add to our virtue, or courage, knowledge, 2 Pet. 1. 5. To be fill'd with all knowledge, Rom. 15. 14. To be fill'd with the knowledge of his will, Col. 1. 9.

4. Another Point of their Wisdom is, that having thus fix'd themselves upon their End, and made it their Profession, it is the constant mark in their Eye, and the daily Care and Employment of their Life; and they are still vigorously intending and driving it on. It fills their Thoughts, that they can afford little room to any thing else. It is the full Employment of their Time, and they labour in it with Pleasure, and are ready to deny themselves their necessary Food, their Rest, their Ease, to serve the End of their Occupation.

And herein it is most fit and needful for the Children of Light to imitate them. The doing their Duty faithfully, and in all Points to their Blessed Lord; which is their End and Profession, should be the constant mark in their Eye, and matter of their Care, as being the chief thing they have set themselves to mind, and daily to labour and employ them-

selves. It is the one thing necessary which they have fix'd and propos'd to themselves, and must be their every day's thought and business. For in every day, and in all Companies and Dealings, they will have Opportunities enough, to do their Duty in fundry Points, or transgress it. And therefore every day, their Eye must be kept earnestly intent, and their Care watchful, and they seriously and vigorously at work, to do the business of their Profession, and discharge faithfully, as they are call'd to them, all those Duties which their Blessed Lord requires of them. And this we are call'd to in the Holy Scriptures, under the several Expressions of *walking with God*, Gen. 5. 24. of *walking before God*, Gen. 17. 1. Of *setting the Lord always before us*, Psal. 16. 8. of being *always upon our watch*, Mar. 13. 35, 37. and *walking circumspectly*, or still having our Eyes intent in every Affair or Time, how we may keep off from all Sin, and faithfully discharge all those particular Duties, which do await us therein, Eph. 5. 15.

5. Another Point of their Wisdom is, that they carefully and timely foresee, and provide for Futurities, so as that nothing may be wanting to set on this End,
and

and Profession, or fall out unawares to prejudice the same. They are intent and careful, not only to use what comes, and make it serve their turn; but to look on carefully to what may come, and consider how it may be made serviceable to their Purpose, or how to prevent or remedy, what might likely be an hindrance; or any ways hurtful to it.

And this part of their Wisdom, in forecasting, and making provision for Futurities, I shall consider in these three Particulars.

First, They forethink, what Means and Methods to take, as most proper for their End and Profession, and fittest to serve it.

Secondly, Having studied and laboured diligently and constantly to compass their desired End, they are careful to secure their Claim and Title to it; and carefully sift and inquire into it, and take all ways they can to make it good, when a Tryal is like to be brought upon it.

Thirdly, They timely provide and forecast Supplies against Streights and Accidents, that when they come they may be as little hurt by them, as may be, or

otherwise provide against them, the best they can.

1. They forethink what Means and Methods to take, as most proper for their End and Profession, and fittest to serve it; the Merchant wisely and carefully considers, what Ports 'tis fittest to send to, and when; and what Goods give greatest appearance of making the best return.

And Men in 'all Trades consider well with themselves, where 'tis best to buy, and what things are likeliest to sell, and forecast in their own minds, what ways and methods are likeliest to make them thrive in their several Occupations. *A King going to War*, as our Lord observes, will first very carefully *consider his Forces*. And a *Builder* going to build, must *consider his Purse*; and what it is like to cost him both in Work and Materials, *Luk. 14. 31, 32. and Vers. 28, 29.* and the *unjust Steward* forecasting for his future support, in his way, wisely resolves on passing false Accounts, that he may find reception *among his Lord's Tenants*, *Luk. 16. 3, 45, 8.*

And this is another piece of Wisdom, most fit for the Children of Light, to imitate

imitate and learn from them. They must wisely consider and observe beforehand, what things do most help and further, what do most tempt and ensnare, what do most obstruct and hinder them, in the way of their Profession, or in faithfully discharging all the Duties of a Christian. They must have carefully, and discreetly fore-thought with themselves against they enter upon every day's Actions, and Business, what Duties they will be likely call'd to exercise therein, and how they may discharge them to the best advantage; what Temptations also they may likely meet withal, and how likely they are to withstand them; or how to prevent, or get seasonably out of their way, if they are like to endanger, or prove too hard for them. They must, by no means, be off-hand, and unstudied Livers; but have their Actions wisely fore-thought, and be still in a readiness, to take the best ways of going on in the work of their Profession; and sincerely discharging their Duty to their Blessed Lord in all the Points thereof.

And this wise and careful Forecast, and fixing on the fittest ways to serve our Purpose, we are called to in the fore-

cited Parables, of the *Builder*, and the *King going to War*; and in the Parable of those, who *built their houses, one upon a Rock, and another upon the Sand*, Matt. 7. 24, 26. If forecast and wise contrivance doth not direct Actions and Undertakings, Folly and Shame are but too like to be the Issue and Event of them.

But on this Point of their Wisdom, in forecasting, and fixing on the properest ways and methods, I shall observe three other imitable Points of their Wisdom, concerning the Execution of them. For they put them in execution,

I. Speedily.

II. With Assiduity and Diligence.

III. With Resoluteness.

I. They put their well-chosen Means of Thriving in Execution speedily. They stay for nothing, but make the most of their good Contrivance as soon as they can. If they have put themselves in readiness against a good Market, without more ado they take it. If they have laid in for a good Bargain, without any delay they are for making an end of it. Where they have prepared an advantage, they are for the first oppor-

opportunity of taking Possession of it. So that they lose nothing by Delays, or by slipping their Times and Seasons. But earnestly desiring to accomplish their Ends, they are still in a readiness hastily to accomplish any wise Means, which will make them Masters of it.

Now in this they should be followed by the Children of Light. For it is not for them, after once they are wisely and well resolved upon their Duty, either a good Life at large, or the Amendment and Improvement of some particular part thereof, to use delays, and put it off from one Duty to another. They must not be on and off in this great Work, as Men who are uncertain; nor slow as Men who are unwilling. Delays shew nothing but the inability, or insincerity of their own Purposes, and are a loud Call for themselves, to renew and make them better. But they must execute their wise Purposes of holy Living without more ado. They must lose no time, but be eager of growing more perfect in it the next day, than they were the day foregoing; they must make no stops, but still earnestly push on, and not cease, till they have made themselves Masters of the Grace, or good Improvements,
which

which they had propos'd to themselves.

And this we are call'd to in the Holy Scriptures, when 'tis said, *To day if ye will hear his voice*, Psal. 95. 7, 8. and *I made hast, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments*, Psal. 119. 60. *Work, whilst it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work*, Joh. 9. 4. And in this great and most important Business, no day is to be neglected, because no man knows, but it may be his last.

2. They put their well-chosen Ways of Thriving in Execution with Assiduity and Diligence. The Tradesman will stick to his Shop from morning till night. And Men of other Occupations will be constantly attending, and ready to take all advantages in the way of their business. And this they do with Good-will, with great Diligence, and Vigour of Application. They will spare no pains, they will miss no advantages, they are not slothful, but push on with all their might, and shew how they can bestir themselves to gain their Purposes.

And this 'tis extremely fit the Children of Light should learn from them. 'Tis not for them to be negligent or slothful, in the work and service of the Lord. It is their one thing necessary;
the

the chief Point they have, or profess to mind ; and therefore they must constantly attend upon it, and stand ever ready to perform a Duty, or avoid a Sin, as any Affairs or Accidents of Life shall give them occasion for the same. And this they must do heartily and earnestly, diligently laying out themselves upon it, and putting what strength they have to it, which can never be better employ'd, nor laid out in any thing, for which it shall in any comparable degree, be so happily and infinitely rewarded.

And this the Holy Scripture requires of us, when it calls us to be always upon our *watch*, Mar. 13. 35, 37. to attend this as the *one thing necessary*, Luk. 10. 42. *To give all diligence in it*, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 10. *and to serve the Lord with all our mind, and with all our strength*, Mar. 12. 30. and the like.

3. They put these well-chosen Means in Execution with resoluteness ; they are not discourag'd by occurrent Difficulties, nor driven back by the Labour or Pains, or by the length and tediousness of their Business. They are not weary of their work, but overlook Troubles, and bear Self-denials, and go on with Zeal, and without Faintness, till they have accomplish'd

plish'd their desired Purpose. All Labour is easie to them, that accomplishes their desire; and they will not cease labouring, till they have done their utmost, to gain what they seek for.

And this also should be imitated by the Children of Light. If they want Zeal and good Resolution, they are not like to do much; nor are sure to be constant in the work of good Living. But they must go on without Fear or Slackness; they must think no Pains too dear, to perfect themselves in any Duties. They must be ready, and willing to part with any thing else, rather than wittingly transgress their Duty in any particular, or fall short of eternal Happiness. That is *the pearl of price*, which *they must sell all to purchase*, Matt. 13. 44, 46. they must shun no Troubles, or fly from any Losses, which will surely be repaid, with such an inestimable Recompence. Nay, instead of shunning them, they have the truest cause to give thanks, and rejoyce therein.

And this the Holy Scripture requires, when it calls us to *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, Ephes. 6. 10. to be *terrified in nothing by our adversaries*, Phil. 1. 28. Not to put on *the spirit*

of

of fear, but of love to God, of Power, or Courage, and of a sound mind, 2 Tim.

1. 7. and to be always stedfast and unmoveable in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor.

15. 58. To deny our selves, and to take up the Cross, and to bear it after Christ, if we would be his disciples, Matt. 16. 24. and ch. 10. 38.

2. Another instance of their forecast, and provision for Futurities, is, that having studied and labour'd thus to compass their End, they are careful to secure their Claim and Title to it. But more especially careful to sift and inquire into it, and to take all ways they can to make it good, when a Tryal is like to be brought upon it. If it be a Tryal for Estate, or much more for Life, how forecasting and busie are they, in inquiring into the merit of their Cause; in collecting and clearing up Evidences; in preparing Witnesses, consulting Council, and making their Case as good, as it can be made against the Great Affize.

Now the Children of Light are absolutely inexcusable, if they learn not this Point of Wisdom from them. For the Interest which they have to secure, is not like that of worldly Men, vain, transitory and fading, which may soon be
taken

taken from them, or which they shall surely be soon taken from. But it is an *eternal life*, Mar. 10. 30. *A crown of glory that fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. 5. 4. a State where they need no sun to light them; where all tears are wip'd away from their eyes, and there shall be no more crying, nor sorrow, nor pain, Rev. 21. 4. and 23.

Now all this most happy State depends upon our perfecting our Obedience to all the Laws of our Blessed Saviour, whilst we are here in this World. And whether we have faithfully discharged the same or no, must come to a most fair and just Examination and Account, when we all come (as we all most certainly shall soon come) to be tryed upon the same at the last Judgment. And therefore, it infinitely concerns all good serious Christians, to be often and carefully before-hand inquiring into the State of their Souls, to see whether they are fit to stand in that Tryal or no. They must pose themselves upon all those Points, upon which God will try them; at least according to the best of their knowledge they have of them, or under their Circumstances and Opportunities, are sincerely able to compass of the same; and where they find they have
wil-

wilfully fail'd in any part of that Obedience, which God necessarily requires, they must instantly amend, and recover themselves into a state of Bliss and Happiness. And this they must do; not only once or twice; for mens spiritual State is often variable, and their Life is always uncertain, and therefore it is a thing that needs more frequent doing; especially till they come to acquire a steadiness in a safe Condition, that so they may be always ready; and if God call them unawares, they may not be surprized thereby, but go with comfort to give up their Accounts to him.

And this God requires of us, when he calls us, *To give all diligence, to make our calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. and *to fear least having a promise left us of entering into his rest, any of us should fall short of it*, Heb. 4. 1. and *to look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God*, Heb. 12. 15.

3. They timely provide and forecast Supplies, against Streights and Accidents; that when they come, they may be, as little hurt by them as may be, or otherwise provide against them the best they can. And this was the Wisdom which the Lord commended in the *unjust Steward*: for he was in a great streight

streight, being warn'd out of his Lord's Service; and makes a wise, speedy and seasonable provision for himself, by taking Care to be received among his Lord's Tenants. And 'tis the same with Men of all other Occupations. If Streights or Misfortunes are like to come upon them, they foresee them in time, and try all ways in due Season to prevent them; or to keep them off as long as they can, or to make them fall as light as may be, when they do come. But be it better, or worse, they are careful to make the best for themselves, which they are able to do in their present Circumstances and Condition.

Now in this also, it is very fit the Children of Light should learn from them. They must have their Eyes before them, and timely foresee; where they want Counsel, and there provide Instruction; where they may be attacked on a weak side, and there contrive how to keep out of the way of Temptation; where they are like to be call'd to do their Duty; and there forecast how to do it faithfully and probably; where they are like to meet with Difficulties, and disoblige Friends, and disserve Interests, and there either wisely contrive,
how

how to withdraw themselves from them, or vigorously, and steadfastly resolve to break through them, where Crosses are like to come, how they may meet and receive them with Meekness and Patience. A good Christian must not want fore-sight, and be plung'd in Difficulties, and fall into Folly unawares; but must wisely and seasonably foresee what may happen, and be ready to make the best of all when it comes.

And this the Holy Scripture calls for in the Parable of *the wise and foolish Virgins*; the difference betwixt which two, lay in their fore-cast, and in making, or not making seasonable and sufficient provision for Futurities, *Matt. 25. 1, &c.* Of the *two Men building their houses, one upon a Rock, and the other upon the Sand*, *Matt. 7. 24, 26.* Of the *Builder* fore-casting well with himself, how to defray all Charges, and Accidents of Work, and Materials, and *how able he is to finish*, *Luk. 14. 28.* and the like.

6. A sixth Instance, formerly noted of the Wisdom of worldly Men in their Managements, is, that they are ready to cast off any Cares, or Concerns, when they either find or foresee, that they are like to prove Impediments, or

Incumbrances in their main business. If they have grasp'd at more business than they can manage to advantage,° they will ease their hands, by laying that aside which is least for their Purpose. If some proves to be but of little Profit, and uncertain Hazard, and of much Pains; they will try another way, which is like to yield better, with more Ease and less Uncertainties. They are ever true to their Point, and will not engage themselves in ways, which make against it.

Now this likewise is very fit to be learnt of them by all good Christians. 'Tis not for them to engage themselves for any Inducement in any ill things, for that is absolutely contrary to all their obedient Professions. Nor in any Occupations, or business which abound so much with strong Temptations, that there is no reasonable expectation, of their keeping Innocence, and faithfully discharging their Duty therein.

In their Consideration, and Choice of all these things; the first thing to be looked at and cared for, is keeping Innocence, and whether their business is fairly consistent with an intire discharge of their Duty in all Points. And where he can make a moderate, and reasonable
advan-

advantage, by Innocence and Fairness, there a good Man will be easie and exemplary too in his Occupation. Nor must they give way to over-much business; Religion, as our Saviour says, being eat up by the Cares of this World. Nor meddle with more, than allows them daily to discharge their Duty both towards God and Man. And faithfully to attend, and acquit themselves in all the Duties of a Christian as they come before them.

Now this the Holy Scriptures require of us, when they tell us, that the *World is crucified to us in Christ Jesus*; and we *unto the World*, Gal. 6. 14. *to lay aside every weight that oppresses us*, Heb. 12. 1. and *not intangle our selves in any Affairs*, to the hindrance of his Service, who hath chosen us to eternal Life in Heaven, 2 Tim. 2. 4.

7. They are studious and observant, to direct all Accidents and Occurrences, and cast about, how they may pick out any advantage from them; or make them serviceable to their own great Purpose. They are quick to espy an advantage, and as quick to pursue it, and let nothing pass by them neglected; if they can serve themselves thereof: And by this they bring in to themselves ma-

ny an accidental Advantage, in the way of their several Occupations.

And this 'tis very fit the Children of Light should imitate them in. In all they do, and in all they receive, or meet withal, they should look about, and carefully consider; how they may turn it to give Praise, or to do Honour unto God; how it may be improved for the advantage and exercise of any Vertue, for the greater sleighting, and contempt of this World, and preference of the next; for the Encouragement, and Love of whatsoever is good; and for the Hatred, and Discouragement of whatsoever is evil. And this is to Spiritualize all the Things of common Life; to turn Conversation, Business, and the Accidents of this World into Religion; to own God as the beginning, and to make him the end of every thing. And it will produce a marvellous encrease of Goodness, Devotion, Godly care, and spiritual Heavenly living.

And this the Holy Scripture calls for, when it bids us, *Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God,* 1 Cor. 10. 31. *And whatsoever we do, in word, or deed; to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus,* Col. 3. 17.

8. When

8. When any thing is proposed to them; their Eye falls in the first place upon their chief End, and they either accept or refuse the same, according as it may be like to serve, or disserve them, in their Prosecution and Attainment thereof. Their first Reflection is, how it suits with the Interest of their Occupation; whether it may be made serviceable thereto, or is like to be of no use to them, or it may be a diversion, or prejudice to them, in their Prosecution of the same. And they are sure to be true to their main Interest, and listen to nothing, that would take them off from, or disserve them in it. He who sets up for Gain, will neglect Power, or Pleasures, where they are like to cause much expence. He who pursues Pleasures, will not listen to the motions of Gain, or Business, when they are like to cost much Pains, or prove inconsistent with his Diversions. He who is set upon Improvement of Knowledge, will set aside worldly Cares and Interests, when they take him from the Prosecution of his Studies. Their great End is the Rule of all the rest; and they stand true and fix'd to it; and rate and measure, the Desirableness of all things thereby, which are offer'd to them.

Now this is an excellent Point of Wisdom, for the Children of Light to learn from them. Whatsoever is offer'd to them, their eye must fix in the first place to sift, and examine the Innocence, before they listen at all to any Suggestions of the worldly Expedience of it. If it is ill, or tends to ill, or would hinder them in the doing of their Duty, or expose them to transgress it; or make for the Dishonour of God, or the Disparagement of the way of Godliness; no Considerations in the World must make them listen to it; or deliberate with themselves, whether they should or no. They must measure all Proposals, by their Usefulness to their Souls, and take God and Religion into their Consideration in the first place: And this is to act like Men, who have immortal Souls, and seek immortal Happiness, and know the price of both. And this will make them not to judge, or act like other Men. But they will carefully seek, what others carefully shun; and be thankful, where they complain. It will make them chuse Self-denials, and Mortifications, which are a worldly Uneasiness, when they are needful to a spiritual Advantage; and refuse the Pleasures of the Flesh, and
any

any Advantages of this World, when they are like to prove a spiritual Prejudice. Yea, to embrace any worldly Losses and Prejudices, and that with joy, when they come upon them for keeping strictly to the way of Righteousness; and for doing their Duty faithfully to their Blessed Lord and Saviour, as they ought to do.

Now this also the Holy Scripture calls for, when it requires us to *love God with all our heart*; that is, to love him above all, *Matt. 12. 30. That if we regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not hear us, Psal. 66. 18. That if we love lands, or father, or mother, or our own lives, more than our Blessed Lord, we are unworthy of him, Matt. 10. 31. Luk. 14. 26. And the like.*

9. They are jealous of their great End, and examine nicely, and are very Difficultly brought to give way, to any thing that seems to bear any colour, or may in any likelihood turn to its prejudice. They may be over-seen in lesser matters, but they are suspicious about this, which they count of price. They will fear as far, as there is any cause or pretence to fear, and resolve with great wariness, and be ready to start any pos-

sible Detriments and Objections, and pause on any appearance of Inconveniences which it may bring to them in prosecuting the same.

And this again, is an admirable and useful Point of Wisdom, for the Children of Light to take up from them. They must not be for taking the utmost Liberties in any Duties, and for coming as near the breach thereof as they can. Nor for abiding in the Neighbourhood, or within the Confines of Sin, where they may be in great danger of being won at last by its Temptation. But they must keep all at the greatest distance, which may be like to damnifie, or endanger their Holy Obedience. They must carefully preserve the Virgin innocence, the first Modesties, Fears, and Reluctancies of Conscience, against every evil thing. And not sit down by Dangers, or dwell with Temptations, or indulge small Degrees, or listen in the least to any ill Advice, or bear the proposal of any evil Things: But take Alarm at the remote approaches, and first appearances of sin; and keep all Temptation, that may draw on the love and practice of any sin, as far off from them as they can. They must rather wisely forbear lawful and
safe

safe things, than by allowing themselves therein, bring themselves into any hazard of others, which may bring danger with them.

And this the Holy Scriptures require at our hands, when they tell us, that *we stand by faith; and must not be high-minded, but fear*, Rom. 11. 20. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation*, Matt. 26. 41. *To abstain from all appearance of evil*, 1 Thes. 5. 22. *And to have no fellowship with any deeds of darkness; but to reprove them*, Eph. 5. 11.

10. They are very active and industrious to engage Succours, when they are needful to their great Purposes. So the Steward was in the Text, when he had lost the Friendship of his Lord, he seeks to make Friends among his *Lord's Tenants*. And thus the *King going to War*, if he finds he is too weak, seeks about to strengthen himself by assistance of other Princes; which if he cannot effect, he sends timely to *offer terms and conditions of peace*, Luk. 14. 31, 32. Where Danger appears they are careful, if they can engage help by any means, not to stand by themselves, but to be prepared with such helps and succours, as may give Protection from them.

And

And this also is a great and most serviceable piece of Wisdom, for the Children of Light to learn from them. They must strengthen themselves in every good and difficult Work, and desire some good Christian Friend to be their Admonisher therein; yea, they are mutually *to teach and admonish one another*, Col. 3. 16. *To exhort one another daily*, Heb. 3. 13. *To stand fast and strive together*, Phil. 1. 27. *To pray for one another*, Jam. 1. 16. And earnestly to desire each others Prayers, 1 Thes. 5. 25. *To pray earnestly themselves to God for his grace*, Jam. 5. 13. 1 Thes. 5. 10. And to be liberal in Alms, which send up a sweet smell before God; and which though in the Men of this World, who get Money ill, and spend it ill, it be call'd *the Mammon of Unrighteousness*; yet in Christians, who get it justly, and lay it out virtuously and charitably, our Blessed Lord tells us, it will *make them friends in everlasting habitations*, Luk. 16. 9.

Such as these are the Instances of Wisdom, which I thought fit, pursuant to our Lord's Direction in the Text, to note in the Managements of worldly Men; and earnestly to recommend to the Children of Light from them. And 'tis
not

not to be imagin'd what advantage they would find to themselves in the perfecting of their spiritual Course, if they would but wisely observe, and remember these excellent Rules of their Managements, and carefully use and follow them, in pursuing their own infinitely better, and more happy Purposes.

For this way their Duty would continually be their Mark, and in their Eyes; they would not only secretly propose, but openly profess it; they would study to be thorowly inform'd in every part thereof, that they might not be wanting in the Knowledge of their Profession; they would make it as their daily Mark, so their daily Care and Employment, and be continually driving it on; they would timely and carefully foresee, and provide for Futurities, contriving and fixing on the fittest means of improvement in their way, and executing them with speed, Affiduity and Resoluteness; and look oft, and inquire before-hand, into the state of their Souls; to see whether they are fit to give a good Account of themselves to God in the last Judgment; and if they are not, to supply what is wanting; and that without delay

lay, now whilst they have time for it ; and timely provide and fore-cast, against any spiritual Streights and Accidents ; that when they come, they may not be unready, or surprized by them ; they would be ready to cast off any Cares and Concerns which prove, or are like to prove an hindrance, or incumbrance, or any ways a snare to them in the way of their Holy Obedience. They would study how to direct all Accidents and Occurrences ; and seek how they may spiritualize, or pick any thing out of them ; for the Honour of God, and Improvement of themselves or others, in the way of Holy Obedience and Religion. When any thing were offer'd to them, their first Reflection and Inquiry would be, whether it were innocent, and lead to good, and made for the easier, and more profitable discharge of their Duty, not staying to give the least ear thereto, if it tend to the contrary ; they would even be jealous about doing their Duty, and keep all Dangers far off, and not come near any thing, that may any wise lessen their Aversion to what is ill, or tempt them to the Commission of it. And they would be very studious and industrious to gain Succours, seeking out
for

for all good and proper spiritual Helps, when they are needful to their Holy Obedience.

Now what a Body of Christians would these ways make, would they all govern themselves thereby, in the faithful discharge of their Duty, as I have directed? We should hear no Complaints of the impossibility, or extreme difficulty of doing their Duty. We should see a Generation of Saints, fit to be Lights to the World, to live without any imputable fault or blemish; and die with Comfort, and enter into everlasting Joy and Peace. Which God of his infinite Grace and Mercy grant unto us all, for the sake of the Son of his Love, and our only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the Blessed for evermore. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE V.

About the Return of Prayers, or when we may, and when we may not, promise our selves the particular things we ask for.

On Matt. 7. 7, 8. *Ask and it shall be given you; for every one that asketh, receiveth.*

IF we consider all those Blessings, which God has promis'd to this Duty of Prayer, we shall presently be induced to conclude, that a Man who can make use of it, can stand in need of nothing. For so abundantly has God engag'd himself to all Supplicants, and so comprehensive the Promises, which he has made to our Prayers, that we may seem to have it in our Power, to have every thing for asking. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, says David,*

vid, to all that call upon him in Truth, Psal. 145. 18. and in another place, Thou Lord art good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee, Psal. 86. 5. And whatever you shall ask in prayer believing, says our Saviour, you shall receive, Matt. 21. 22.

Thus ample and munificent, full and comprehensive are those Promises, which God has made to our Prayers. If we want pardon for our Sins, he bids us ask, and we shall have it. If we need Strength and Aid to overcome Temptations, he orders us to seek it at his hands, and we shall find it. If we want any Mercy, either Spiritual, or Temporal, he directs us to address our selves to him for a supply, and binds himself to grant what we desire of him.

But yet notwithstanding all these rich and extensive Promises, which God has made to our Prayers; we daily see that vast numbers of Men, who pray to God, are not thus better'd or supply'd by them. For how many are there in the World, who are, it may be, every Morning and Evening upon their Knees, desiring pardon for their Sins, who will yet be eternally condemn'd and punish'd for them? How many Men are frequently

ly and importunately asking Grace, and Strength to overcome Temptations, who are still ordinarily overcome by them? They pray for Sobriety, but yet they continue intemperate: They sue for Meekness, but still they are fierce and passionate: They ask for Peace, but yet they remain unruly and turbulent; they beg Humility, Contentedness, Charity and several other Vertues, and after all they rest still as Proud and Covetous, Wrathful and Contentious as ever.

Now here God's Promises are not perform'd, and Men's Prayers are not answered; so that 'tis certain, there must be a failure some where. Either God doth not give Men what he Promises; or they do not ask as they ought to do, who should receive. Some fault there is, either in God's Faithfulness, or our Prayers, which renders them so unsuccessful, and makes them so often bring down nothing to us, where they are promised all.

And in this Competition, it is an easie thing to Apologize for my Maker, and to assert the Honour of his Truth, and Faithfulness in this Business. He is always as good as his word, and not only willing, but forward to give all; Nay,

L

more

more than he has promised, if we would but take care to ask as he requires. But all the hindrance lies in our own selves. We do not ask like Men who would obtain; we do not sue for Pardon, as he will bestow it; nor pray for Grace, as if we desired it, or had a mind to make any use of it, and therefore after all our Prayers for God's Supplies, we are still as indigent as we were before; *Ye ask and receive not, says St. James, Ye desire and cannot obtain, because you ask amiss,* Jam. 4. 2, 3. Whereas would we ask things, in such wise as God has promised to grant them; and seek them upon such terms, as he has offer'd to bestow them. Would we ask for Pardon of our sins, only in repenting of them, and forsaking them; and for Grace and Virtue, in the use of good and wise Endeavours after them; 'tis certain, we should not go without them. *Ask, says our Saviour, it shall be given you; for every one that asketh in this wise receiveth.*

To make my Discourse upon this subject as useful as I can, I shall enquire into these two things.

First, Upon what terms we are to pray for any of God's Mercies. And when that is secured,

Second-

Secondly, In what manner we ought to pray for them.

1. I shall inquire upon what terms we are to pray for any of God's Mercies; and under what Conditions we must hope to receive them. God's Promises run upon Conditions, he engages to bestow Benefits when we perform Duties, and offers the reward, after we have done the Service. And now what God promises only conditionally, we must not ask absolutely; we must not expect that he will give, till we come duly qualified, and fitted to receive; we must seek his Mercies on his own terms; and ask them only in such wise as he has undertaken to bestow them. And this is that rule which St. John prescribes to us, which he makes the great Condition of our Prayers, and the measure of our Expectations. *This, says he, is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us,*
1 Joh. 5. 14.

To know then when we ask any thing upon God's own terms, and sue for Mercies in such sort, as he has promised to bestow them; we must enquire what his Will is concerning any thing which

we ask for, or upon what terms he will give them ; and on what Conditions the Gospel bids us hope to receive them ; and if we come duely prepared therewith, we may be sure upon our Prayers to receive them.

Now that Condition whereupon God has promised to forgive us any wilful Sin, *i. e.* any Sin against our own knowledge, or against the Checks and Warnings of our own Minds and Consciences, is our sincere Repentance of it, and Care to amend and forsake it. And that Condition, whereupon he has promis'd to bestow upon us any Vertue, is our own serious and diligent seeking, and endeavouring after it. And that Condition whereupon he has promised, to confer upon us any gracious Assistances of his Holy Spirit, is so far forth, as we are honestly prepared to use them ; and carefully co-operate our selves, and concur therewith ; and that Condition whereupon he has engaged to give us health, or ease, or safety, or any outward Blessings, when we seek and labour after them, is so far forth as in the Wisdom of his All-seeing Providence, he sees them fitting for us ; or conducing to the advantage of the World, and the benefits of others.

others. Upon these terms God has promised to bestow these Mercies; and if we have them to shew, when we pray, our Prayers shall certainly procure them; but if we are void of them, our Prayers can have no such effect; but after all we shall still be unrelieved and go without them. We ask what God is resolved not to grant, and seek what he has declared, we shall never find; and such Petitions can never take effect, but must needs be unsuccessful. If we ask his Pardon for any Sin, whilst we impenitently go on therein, and continue to repeat the same; he tells us plainly, if we will believe him, that we shall not be pardon'd, but that *except we repent we shall surely perish*. If we beg his Grace whilst we never use it, nor endeavour after those Vertues which we pray for; he assures us, that we shall be so far from being intrusted with more Grace; that we shall lose what we have received already, and that *from him that hath not, shall be taken even that which he hath*; these Prayers being altogether against his Will, and contrary to the Declarations of his Gospel; they cannot be heard unless God should change his mind, and give us a new Religion, and other ways of obtaining his favour,

than those which we have received already.

But in Matters of this moment to be more particular.

1. As for pardon of our Sins, God will not grant that, till we repent of them and forsake them; so that whensoever we ask Pardon of them, we must for ever renounce them, and bid adieu to them; or else according to those terms of Mercy Christ has purchased for us, we cannot hope to be forgiven. *When the wicked Man forsakes his way, says God by Ezekiel, and turns from the wickedness he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right; he shall save his Soul alive; he shall surely live, and not die, Ezek. 18. 27, 28. Repent, says St. Peter, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Act. 3. 19. But except you repent, says our Saviour, you shall all perish, Luk. 13. 3.*

Thus is sincere Repentance, and forsaking sin made the great Condition of the Forgiveness of it. And therefore if any Man would pray for the Pardon of his sins, according as the same is promised by God, and is to be expected by us, he must first renounce the Sin, which he desires God to pardon, and pray for the

the Forgiveness of it, with true penitential Purposes and Engagements, and change of Mind and Practice; he must not lie labouring at the Throne of Grace, and think to weary God with importunate intreaties, to pardon him without more ado, and to forgive him his Sin, whilst he continues unreclaimed from it. He must not pray against a dreadful Punishment, whilst he continues in a wicked Practice; and seek to appease God, before he has reform'd himself. No he must fit himself for the favour before he ask it; he must first repent and amend, and then let him in his Prayers profess he doth, and upon these Petitions he shall be pardon'd. And upon these terms we are taught to beg pardon in our publick Prayers; concerning which I must profess from my own Experience; that the more I understand of my Religion, and the further I consider them; the more cause I see, as for the Body of them, most thankfully to admire and approve of them. And in them when we are exhorted to *confess our sins, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same*, we are taught to do it, *with a penitent and obedient Heart*; and again when after the Confession of

our faults, we come to sue for favour, we do it only in confidence of this Profession of Repentance, desiring God that he would *restore them that are penitent*. And when afterwards we come to hear the comfortable Words of God, in the absolution of the Minister, we are told only of his *absolving those that truly repent*; and of his pardoning such as turn away from Sin. This I have noted for this end, that we may understand our own Devotions, and come to them prepared, with that full Purpose of reforming and change of Heart, which is absolutely necessary for the acceptance of them. And when we pray thus, and with penitent Hearts ask for God's Pardon, he will be sure to grant it, and we shall not miss of the Mercy and Forgiveness which we pray for.

2. As for the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, he has no where promised to grant it, nor have we any ground to expect it, unless we are honestly prepar'd to make a good use of it, and carefully to co-operate our selves and concurr with it.

And as for any gracious Tempers, and virtuous Dispositions, he has not promised to give, nor must we hope to receive

ceive them, unless we our selves do seriously and diligently seek and endeavour after them. So that whensoever we ask for the help of God's Grace, or for any holy Dispositions or Vertues, it must be in the honest use of our own Industry and good Endeavours. God will not bestow new Grace upon us, till he sees that we have made a good use of what he has bestowed already: And we must improve the Talents which formerly were intrusted with us, before he will think us duly qualified to receive more, as we are told in the *Parable of those, who had received the Talents*, Matt. 25. For this is the rule of God's Dispensation; *unto every one that hath, i. e. hath made good use and improvement of what he had committed to him, as the good Servant had done, Ver. 20. 22. shall more be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not; i. e. hath not been careful to use and improve the same, as the wicked Servant had not done, who went and hid it, Ver. 25. from him shall be taken even that which he hath, Ver. 29.*

As for those Prayers then which God will answer, if they be for pardon of Sins, or for Grace and vertuous Dispositions,

sitions, they must be sincerely penitent and industrious. God has promised no Pardon but upon true Repentance, nor any saving helps and assistances of his Spirit or vertuous Tempers, but upon our honest Industry and good Endeavours. And therefore if we would ask these Mercies as God has promised to grant them, and as the Gospel bids us hope to receive them, we must pray for Forgiveness with true Repentance ; and for God's Grace with sincere Purposes to make good use thereof ; and for any vertuous Tempers, with a Preparation to take pains for them, and seriously, and carefully to endeavour afterwards to acquire the Vertue which we have prayed to God for. An impenitent Man's Prayer for the pardon of his Sins, will be of no avail with God ; for he will not forgive us our Sins, whilst we go on in them. And an idle unworking Persons Prayer for any particular Grace or Vertue, is offensive to him. The only Prayers which he hears for these things, are the Prayers of the sincerely penitent, and industrious ; and if our Prayers are qualified thus, they are such as he will own, and as he has bound himself, in Truth and Faithfulness, he will most certainly

tainly answer and reward them. And then,

Thirdly, As for the third sort of things, which Men are wont to pray for, *viz.* Health, or Sustenance, or Safety, or any other outward Blessings; God expects in his Gift of these, as I have shew'd he does in his Gifts of Grace, and Holy and vertuous Dispositions, that they themselves should labour after them; and be diligent in the use of wise and due means to attain them; it not being his way to heal or feed, or secure Men by Miracle, but only by Blessing their own care and pains in pursuit of these Mercies. And much more doth he expect, both in spiritual and temporal Blessings, that they should not take any Courses, which are directly contrary to them. When they pray for Deliverance from any Sin, they must not put themselves in the way of Temptations, which are still apt to make them to fall into it; when they pray to God for Health, they must not put it away from themselves by Intemperance; or by any gross neglects, or abuse of their own Bodies, when they pray to him, to secure the Church or our Holy Religion; they must not put a stop to their own Prayers, by seeking a security from Sin,

Sin, or by an unwise Compliance with any other methods, which are liker to destroy, than to secure the same. If we expect that he should hear and further our Prayers, we must shew first, that we are in earnest with him, by furthering them ourselves; and not falling to such Courses as directly overthrow our own Petitions.

And when we do thus wisely endeavour after any outward things, God has no where promised to grant them, nor may we hope to receive them, further than in the Wisdom of his All-seeing Providence, he sees them fit for us, and conducing to the benefit and advantage of the World, and the good of others. So that whensoever we ask them, it must be with this reserve, if in his Wisdom he sees it fitting.

In spiritual Mercies, we are sure of the Grace or Vertue we desire, if we come duly prepared to receive them. But in temporal; the having, or not having of what we ask is uncertain, and always depends on this; if God in his Wisdom sees it fit, we should have them. Sometimes outward Blessings, whether of Health, or Ease, or Plenty, are not fit for us, but would turn in the end by far
more

more to our hurt than to our advantage. They would carnalize our Souls, and render us sensual and earthly minded; proud and insolent; they would make us forget God, and sleight his Service, affront those who are placed above, and oppress such as he has set below us. Prosperity is a state of great danger to Mens Souls, it exposes them to many Vices, and puts them under a number of Temptations to several instances of Disobedience; and 'tis the Concern of every one who has pious Wisdom, and prudent Care enough; to avoid being insnared by it. *The prosperity of Fools*, says *Solomon*, instead of being a Blessing to them, doth destroy them, Prov. 1. 32. *Then Jesurun waxed fat, saith Moses, he kicked against him who made him so; when he was grown thick and covered with fatness, then he forsook God that made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation*, Deut. 32. 15. There are but few Minds that can grapple with the Temptations, which are still solliciting Persons in Wealth and Honours, Pleasures, and Affluence; but they are generally led away into several Sins, and overcome by them. And I doubt not but that several Persons, whose Souls have utterly miscarried in a prospe-

prosperous State, might have done well, and have gone to Heaven, had it pleased God to have visited them more frequently with Crosses; and to have kept them under the most gracious and wholesome Discipline, of a troubled and afflicted state of things.

Outward Mercies then are not always fit for us, but would often prove a snare, and a most dangerous Temptation to us. And when they would do so, they are neither fit for us to ask, nor so long as he retains any Love and Kindness for us, for God to grant us. They are no fit matter in this case for God to promise, and so are no fit subject, wherein we are to hope he always should perform.

Again at other times outward Blessings are denied; tho' not so much for our own sakes, yet for the good of others, and the advantage of the World. Oft-times God sees it necessary in the World, to set out some examples of Content, and instances of Patience; that Men may see both what they ought to follow, and how they may be able to perform it. And so never be discouraged with desponding thoughts of their being unable to bear those things with Patience, if they should be call'd to it, which they see

see are born by others like themselves with Patience every day. Example is a great Encouragement to action, it shews that a thing is feasible, and strangely animates any gallant Mind, with undaunted Courage, and great Confidence of Resolution, to pass through those Difficulties, which they see Time and Patience, will overcome in the pursuit of good and honourable things. And thus God set out *Job* and *David*, and abundance of Prophets, and righteous Men in the Old Testament; and our Saviour in the New set out himself, and his Holy Apostles, and generally the whole Body of Christians in the first Ages, and great numbers in all Ages ever since, to be Patterns of Meekness in Afflictions unto others; and to shew Men what it is to bear hard things with Patience; and to submit to his Wisdom, and own his Mercy and Goodness; in all his Disposals and Administrations of the World.

So that even when outward Blessings and Enjoyments might be trusted with us, and would be no ways prejudicial to us in our own Persons; yet doth God in his good Providence, which is to take Care, not only of us, but of all the World, see fit many times to deprive us of them,
for

for the sake of others; that we may be examples to them, and that they may learn from our Sufferings, and our meek Carriage under the same, both to be thankful for their own Blessings, whilst we want, and they enjoy them, and to be ready to part with them with Patience at an evil Day.

And since God will not bestow upon us outward Blessings, when either they are unfit for our selves, or when he sees it proper to deprive us of them for the sake of others: whensoever these Cases happen we must not expect them. And because when this would be, God only knows but we are ignorant: Whensoever we ask any outward things, we must do it with Submission, and under this conditional Reserve, if he sees them fitting and convenient, and leave the Determination to the Wisdom of his unerring Judgment. And in this way our Blessed Saviour hath lead us, in the highest instance of this sort of Prayers; when he prayed against all the Pains and Horrors of his Sufferings, Father, says he, *If it be possible let this bitter Cup pass from me, nevertheless, I determine nothing, but refer all to thy unerring Wisdom in this matter, not my Will but thine be done,* Matt. 26. 39. Thus

Thus then we see when God will grant us any outward Blessings, such as Health, or Ease, or Plenty, or the like; when we ask them for our selves. And the same return will he make to our Prayers, when we pray for Peace or Prosperity, or other outward Blessings for the publick also. For if a Nation is just and fears God, and is fit to be prosper'd; and if it would not abuse it, but serve God more thereby; so that it would be no ways hurtful to themselves; or if the open scandal of their Sins do not call for Justice, and require that they be made an Example unto others; and if it is otherwise agreeable and consistent with the wise Ends of God's good Providence, and his Care of others; he will give this outward Prosperity to a People, that earnestly begs and prays for it, and carefully and wisely seeks it, and endeavours after it. But if their Sins call for Scourges; if by Prosperity they would justify and harden themselves the more in their Iniquities, and grow wanton and bold in Sin, and make use thereof, only to make more Provision for their Lusts; if they have greatly dishonoured and offended God, and are not humbled for the things that provoke him; if they

M

have

have hardned themselves against all other means of God's Providence, turning his Grace into wantonness, and his Bounty and Forbearance into an occasion of greater Sinfulness, and are not to be reclaimed, but by Chastisements and severe Inflictions; or if there be a necessity in the Course of God's Government to make them an Example for the terror of others; or if any other ways it would make against the wise Ends of God's most Holy and good Providence, then he will hold his hand; and notwithstanding all the earnest, importunate, and incessant Prayers that are made for the same, refuse to bestow it on them. So that in asking outward Blessings for the publick, as well as for our private Concerns; for the Kingdom we are of as well as for our selves; we must always have this conditional reserve, if God sees them fitting, and referr themselves to his Wisdom, whether he see convenient to grant them at our Prayers or no.

And thus it appears, upon what Terms we are to pray for any of God's Mercies, whether spiritual or temporal; whether relating to this life, or to that which is to come. If we beg Pardon for our
Sins,

Sins, we must ask it with true Repentance and forsaking of them. If we desire Grace, it must be with a full Purpose to make a good use thereof; and if we desire any Virtues and holy Dispositions, it must be with a Preparation of mind diligently to use the means, and to put forth, our best Endeavours to attain them. And if we pray for any outward worldly thing, whether for our selves or others, besides our labouring after the same in wise ways, we must expect no issue but with this reserve, if God sees them fitting, and then acquiesce in the Determination of his Wisdom, whether he see fit to hear our Prayers, by granting of the same or no.

And thus having shewed, upon what Terms we are to pray for any of God's Mercies, whether spiritual or temporal; relating to this life or the next; I proceed now,

Secondly, To shew in what manner we ought to pray for them. When we come to pay our Homage, and to make our Suit to Almighty God; we must be careful of our Carriage, that it shew nothing of disrespect, or a careless regard;

either of him, or of those Mercies which we come to desire at his hands. *God will be honoured in them that come near him*; he expects they should treat him with that Awe and Reverence, that humble Decency, and dutiful Submission of Mind, which becomes them towards their Maker and Benefactor, their supreme Lord and Sovereign. And all this Awe and Reverence, this Honour and humble Respect, must not only be inwardly in their Minds, but in their outward Carriage and Behaviour also. They must use such visible Indications as are known marks of Honour, and express their respect to God by such dutiful and decent Carriage, as they are wont to use towards their Governours, or towards one another. And this way of expressing their Honour and Respect to him, by such allow'd Indications of it as are signs of Honour among themselves, is what God himself appeals to; and that whereby he goes about most convincingly to reprove the religious Rudeness, and ill Manners of the *Israelites*, Mal. i. For when they would pretend to honour God, but yet would put him off with any thing; when they would make shew of offering Sacrifice, and giving Presents
to

to him, but yet make choice of such things to present as were not worth receiving, offering to him, as he complains, *the blind, the lame and the sick* : He tells them plainly, he resents the Indignity, and sets them to consider whether it be any sign of Honour to make choice of such unmannerly, mean, and refuse things, when they have to do with God, as would pass for marks of Irreverence and Disesteem if they were used towards Men. *Offer such things as these*, saith he first, *to thy Governour*, and see whether *he will be pleased with thee, or accept thy Person* for such a Present ; and if these Instances of ill Behaviour and rude Treatment, would by no means please, but highly provoke him ; think not to honour God by that, which would vilify and affront Men, *Verse 8.*

But in this matter to be more particular ; if we would make our Prayers in Christ's Name in such manner, as would become us to offer them, and God to hear them ; we must put them up,

First, With Reverence and Humility.
When we pray to God, we must know,
that we poor Worms are treating with

our Maker ; that we most indigent and helpless Creatures are suing to our noblest Benefactor ; that we sinful Subjects are addressing our selves to the supreme Lord and Sovereign of all the World. And when we have to do with a person so far above us, so unmeasurably kind and beneficial to us, and that has so absolute Authority and Empire over us ; 'tis necessary that then, if ever, we be mindful of our Distance, and make our Application with that Lowliness of Mind, that decent humble Carriage, and careful reverent Deportment, as may plainly evidence, that we have a just Honour and Veneration for the Majesty of that God, whom we address our selves unto. And thus in all our Acts of Worship, whether Prayers or Praises, or hearing of God's Word, or other Acts of Religion, whether in solemn Oaths, sacred Hymns and Thanksgivings, or the like, we compose our selves as in God's Presence, and do not behave our selves lightly and carelessly, but with a visible seriousness and reverence of Soul: We uncover our Heads, and compose our Countenances, and use decent humble Postures, such as Kneeling, Bowing or Standing ; and testify in all our Deportment,

portment, that we are concern'd with that God, whom we can never Honour enough, and whom we seek to evidence our respect unto, by all the proper Signs, and most suitable Indications, whereby we are wont to express it towards Men. This we are all prone to pay, as 'tis fit we should, to Persons that are placed above us; and as forward generally to exact it, of all such as are set below us.

And since we thus expect it, and are ashamed to neglect it towards one another; with what face can we deny it towards God. But if at any time we do, how justly may he take up that Reproof against us, which he did against the unmannerly, and disrespectful *Israelites*; offer this careless and unbecoming Carriage to thy Governour, in any Honour which thou payest him, and see whether he will be pleased with it, and accept it of thee, *Mal. i. 8.*

Secondly, That our Prayers may be put up in such manner, as 'tis fit for us to offer them, or for God to hear them, we must offer them up, with *due Fixedness, and Attention of Mind, and Fervency of Affection.*

We must offer them up with a *due Fixedness, and Attention of Mind*. We must not draw near unto God with our Lips, when our Hearts and Minds are far from him: We must not utter Words by rote, or say our Prayers as Children are wont to Con a Lesson, without any heed, or Application of our Minds to them; but our Thoughts must go along with our Words, and our Minds must be intent, and set upon the Mercies which we pray for. God will not hearken to our Petitions, when it may be we our selves do not hear them; he will not attend to our Requests, when we our selves do not attend to them; he will not grant those Suits, which had only a Form of Words; but nothing of an inward Desire, and spiritual Application in them. So that if only our Tongues pray, and our Minds are straying, we might as well be silent, and not pray at all.

We must offer them up also with a *good measure of Desire, and Fervency of Affection*. A cold Petitioner bespeaks a Denial, instead of a gracious Answer. He seems indifferent in making of his Suit, and so may well expect that God should be indifferent too, and less concern'd

cern'd in granting it. He seems to sleight the Mercy, when he asks it; and so there is the less reason to expect, that he should think himself much obliged by it, or be duely thankful for it, after he has received it. But a fervent Prayer shews how eagerly we desire a Mercy, and how thankfully we are like to receive it. And this is some Encouragement, and a strong Inducement for God to bestow it on us. He is a most tender and indulgent Parent; who cannot deny us any good thing that is fit for us; when he sees we are wrought up to a due Valuation and Esteem of it, and our Hearts are eagerly set upon it. *The fervent Prayer of a righteous Man, saith St. James, availeth much, Jam. 5. 16.*

Thirdly, A third thing that is requisite to an acceptable Prayer, and must recommend it to God's favour, is Faith, or believing we shall receive, when we ask according to his Promise; which our Saviour makes a necessary Qualification to our being heard, Matt. 21. 22. *Whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive; and if any man lack Wisdom, let him ask in Faith, saith St. James, nothing wavering, and it shall be given him, Jam.*

Jam. 1. 5, 6. And the true meaning of this is easily understood from what I have already said concerning the Terms, whereupon God will grant us any of his Mercies. For then we are to believe we shall receive them, when we have perform'd those Conditions, whereupon he has promised to bestow them. So that then we must hope to obtain Pardon for our Sins, when we forsake them, and ask it with true Repentance, and Reformation. And then we must believe, that we shall receive some Virtuous Endowments, when we are careful to attain, and industriously seek after them. And then we must expect to enjoy the Assistance of God's Grace, and Holy Spirit, when we are careful to concur with, and make a good use of it. And then we must expect, upon our Endeavours after the same, to be heard for Health, or Ease, or any prosperous Turns of Providence and outward Things, when God in his Wisdom sees them fitting for us, and consistent either with our own good, or with the greater benefit of others.

It is these Promises of God which must guide our Expectations, and then we must hope to receive any of these Mercies

Mercies from him, asking them in Christ's Name, when we come qualified with these Conditions, whereupon he has engaged to bestow them; to believe that he will grant what we ask of him, when we seek it not upon these Terms, 'tis not Faith but Infidelity; to expect that we should receive these Mercies any otherwise, that we should be pardoned without Repentance, and made Vertuous without our own Care, and good Endeavours, is not Hope but Presumption. We must seek things in God's own way; and then, but not before, we shall be sure to find them.

And that we may always come thus prepared to our Prayers, that so we may obtain the Blessings which we seek for; God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

11 MA 61

A
DISCOURSE

Explaining the
Nature of Edification,

BOTH OF
Particular Persons in Private Graces,
AND OF
The Church in Unity and Peace.

And shewing,
That we must not break Unity and Publick Peace, for supposed Means of better Edifying in Private Virtues.

IN A
VISITATION SERMON

At COVENTRY, May 7. 1684.

DISCOURSE



EXHIBITION

T H E
P R E F A C E.

E*dication, as applied to the whole Body, is in Scripture-Notion the Uniting of the Church ; but now by a very unhappy, tho' a very common Mistake, it is made the great Pretence for Dividing it. For that wherein our Dissenting Brethren hope to shelter themselves in forsaking us, is their Edifying more in Separate Congregations. This is thought a Good Answer to all Laws requiring Communion with the Parish-Churches ; for no Law, they think, can hinder them from Edifying, and saving their own Souls : and a sufficient Reason for their rejecting of any Imposed Pastors, which they fancy are not to be appointed by the Will of the Patron, or the Prescription of the Church, but by every Man's own Choice, because no other is so much concerned for his*
Edifi-

The Preface.

*Edification, as he himself is. To remove
this Cause of Separation, some Worthy * Per-
sons have taken very Pious and Profitable
Pains, in shewing how unjust the Charge of
an Unedifying Ministry is upon our Church,
and how partial they are in ascribing more
Edification to their Meetings. And if our
Brethren will peruse what they have said with
impartial Minds, and see this, as they may
if they will lay aside all Prejudice, there will
be no need of saying any more to satisfy them
in this Business. But if after all they will
be Judges themselves where they Edify most,
and in their Judgment preferr their own
Ministers: yet still there is enough to with-
hold them from Separation on this account,
because they are to edify and build up the
Church of God as well as themselves, and
must not break the Publick Unity and Peace
to carry on their own Profiting in Private
Graces. And therefore, referring them to
the forementioned Discourses (whose Prin-
cipal Design I think that is) to convince
them that their Assemblies are not more,
and ours less Edifying: in that part of
this Sermon which concerns this Case, I
have applied my self more expresly to those
who shall still be unconvinced, and think
they are: and shewn them, that supposing,
what*

*See a Dis-
course of
Profiting
by Ser-
mons: and
another
Of Edifi-
cation.

The Preface.

what indeed is otherwise, that among them Particular Men have better Means of Edification, yet will not the search of that warrant them to divide the Church, and betake themselves to Separation.

And as it will not justify the People in Hearing: so, which is the only thing I shall add further, much less will it justify their Ministers in Preaching in a Separate Meeting. For the Preachers are not less, but more obliged than the People are, to edify the Church of God in the first place. And whatever Necessity they may think lies upon them to Preach the Gospel, in Places where there are no other Preachers: yet where there are, (and our Brethren will not deny there are store of Sound, and Profitable ones among us,) the Care of Edifying the whole Church ought surely to restrain them from breaking Unity by Preaching, and from drawing Men off from hearing us, only in Hopes they may Profit more by joyning with themselves. The Duty, and the Desire, (as of reaping greater Profit themselves, so) of ministering to the greater Profit of any other Particular Christians, must stop, as this Discourse shews, in Peaceable ways. And therefore,

N

till

The Preface.

till our Brethren can Conform, and preserve Unity under their Preaching; they ought to be silent, as the Old Peaceable Nonconformists were, and quietly suffer the People to be taught by others; and not exercise their Ministry out of any Hopes of doing more Good with it to their Particular Hearers, when thereby they must cast off the Authority of their Lawful Superiors, and make a Rent and Division in the Church.

II M A G I

I COR.

1 COR. XIV. 12.

----- Seek that ye may excel to the
edifying of the Church.

THIS Rule is here laid down
in the Case of *Extraordinary* and
Miraculous Gifts, such as *Pro-*
phesy or *Inspired Preaching*, *Tongues*, *Mi-*
racles, and the like, which the *Corinthi-*
ans zealously coveted, to amuse Be-
holders, and get themselves a Name,
more than to Do Good with them to
others, and Edify their Brethren. But
it is equally applicable to all *Ordinary*
Gifts, and *Natural* or *Acquired Endow-*
ments, as *prompt* and *penetrating Wit*;
clear Understanding, *sound Judgment*, *Pru-*
dence in Conduct, *Fluent* and *Elegant*
Speech, and the like: for God's Design
is the same in both; he entrusts us with
them, not to feed Vanity, and only seek
Praise to our selves, but to Profit and
Edify our Neighbours. And as it holds
in all sorts, either of *Natural*, or *Mira-*
culous

The Nature of

culous Gifts; so also in all Places and Offices, which make room for the Exercise and Employment of them. For as Edification is here made the End of all Gifts and Abilities; so is it elsewhere of all Offices and Dignities in the Church. God gave some, Apostles: and some, Prophets: and some, Evangelists: and some, Pastors and Teachers; for the Perfecting of the Saints, and the Edifying of the Body of Christ, Eph. 4. 11, 12. So that Edification is the Great End of all those Gifts wherewith God endows Men, and of all those Stations and Capacities whereto he calls them to shew their Gifts in. It is the main thing, which all are to seek and propose to themselves in all opportunities, either of doing, or receiving Good. Forasmuch as ye are zealous of Spiritual Gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.

In Discourfing upon these Words, I shall,

First, *Explain the Nature of Edification, and shew what Improvement it implies.*

Secondly, *Press it as the Great Point whereat they are to aim, on all sorts of Christians.*

First,

First, I shall *explain the Nature of Edification, and shew what Improvements it implies.* And this well deserves to be distinctly and clearly stated, both for its *own sake*, because God has made it the Prime End whereto all Mens Parts and Opportunities are to be directed; and also for the *Churches*, because the lamentable Divisions, that have so long prey'd upon the Vitals of Religion, and the Bowels of this Church, are in great part owing to Mens Mistakes about it. For one of the Commonest, and, I think, of the most Specious Pretences which our Dissenting Brethren give for their leaving our Parish-Churches, is that *they Edify and Profit more in their Private Meetings.* If this Pretence were true, it seems very plausible. For St. Paul directs all Men to make Edification their Aim in these things, and it seems to argue a great Goodness, and a great Wisdom; and so to be most commendable in any Man, to desire to be better'd by all the Prayers which he uses, and by every Sermon which he hears. And whether it be true or no, they think they are fittest to judge, and that no other Persons are so able to tell them what Prayers and Sermons they are most

The Nature of

benefited by, as from their own Experience they are able to tell themselves. And therefore, fancying it is for their greater growth in Grace and Edification, they take heart, and think no Good Man, who knows how bad he is at best, and is careful to grow as good as he can, will blame them for it, to break the Unity of the Church, and joyn themselves to Separate Congregations, Whereas, were they truly inform'd in the Scripture-Notion of Edification, they would see clearly that there can be no Pretence of Edifying in a *Schism*; and that supposing in some Respects, that they could edify more, as they say, by their own Preachers, yet would not that authorize them to make a Rent in the Church, and separate from us.

Edification, in Scripture-sense, is the same as *Benefiting* or *Profiting*. A Neighbour, as St. Paul notes, is *Edified*, when he is pleased to his Good, Rom. 15. 2: and strange Tongues, he says, do not edify the Church, because they do not profit it, 1 Cor. 14. 5, 6. So that by our being *Edified in Religion*, is meant our *Profiting and Advancing in it*; when we attain, either some Particulars which before we wanted, or more Strength and Firmness in those which we
have

Edification explain'd.

5

have already. The Reason why this *Benefiting in Religion* is call'd *Edifying*, is, because both every *Private Christian*, and the *Whole Church*, is compared in Scripture to a *Building*.

Sometimes *Particular Christians* are called the *Temple of God*. *Know ye not*, says St. Paul, *that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost?* which is spoken of *Particular Persons*. 1 Cor. 6. 19: and again, *What agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols?* 2 Cor. 6. 16. *The Temple of God*, i. e. a believing Husband; *with Idols*, i. e. with an unbelieving Wife who worships Idols, that being plainly the Case there treated of, v. 14, 15.

And at other times, which is the most general use, the *Whole Church* or *Community of Christians* is styled so. The Church is called the * *House of God*,— * Eph. 3. *in the House of God*, saith the Apostle, 19. Heb. *which is the Church*. 1 Tim. 3. 15. 'Tis 3. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 5. call'd his *Temple*—*Ye are the Temple of God*, and the Spirit of God dwells in or † † εν υμιν. among you, as it did in the Temple among the Jews. 1 Cor. 3. 16. and his *Building* — *Ye*, i. e. the Church of Corinth, are *God's Building*, 1 Cor. 3. 9; and the *Church of Jews and Gentiles* mention'd Eph. 2. 19. is call'd the *Building*

fitly framed, that grows into an holy Temple in the Lord, builded for an Habitation of God thro' the Spirit. v. 20, 21, 22.

And this Application of it to both these, is well noted by Theophylact. * The Temple of God, says he, is a Title given in common, both to the Church or Collection of all the Faithful, and to every Private Christian. And because in Scripture-Language,

* Κοινὴ γὰρ ἡ ἐκκλησία τῶν ἀποστολῶν ἐστίν, πάντων ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Theoph. Comment. Eph. 2. v. 21.

both the Whole Church, and Particular Christians, are thus call'd God's Building; pursuant to that Metaphor, the adding and laying together those Excellencies that are to integrate either the Whole Body or any Good Man, or the giving Strength and Firmness to them, is call'd Edification.

Now in explaining this Profiting and Spiritual Edification, I shall shew,

1. *Wherein lies the Edification of Particular Men and Private Christians; and that is in any Growth or Improvement, either in Faith, or Manners.*

2. *Wherein lies the Edification of the Whole Church; and that is mainly in the settled Peace and Union of its Members.*

3. *That this latter is to be preferr'd, and must give Laws and Limitations to all Means*

Means of promoting the former: So that no Man must ever seek to edifie in Schism, or break the Peace of a confessedly Sound and Lawful Church, upon pretence that he can edifie more in Separate Meetings.

I. I shall shew wherein lies the Edification of Particular Men and Private Christians; and that is in any Growth or Improvement, either in Faith, or Manners. This Benefiting of Particular Men, is one sort of Edification which the Scripture speaks of. *He that prophesies, saith Sr. Paul, speaketh unto men to edification, i. e. to the benefit of every one that hears him. 1 Cor. 14. 3. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, i. e. to improve your Brethren as you converse with them. Eph. 4. 29. And let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification, i. e. to profit him in Religion. Rom. 15. 2. In these, and other Places, the Edification spoken of is that of Particular Men and Private Christians, when they are any ways furthered and assisted in those Things, which may please God, and save their Souls.*

Now Religion consisting of two Great Parts, *Faith, and Obedience; the*
Spiritual

The Nature of

Spiritual Profiting and Edification of every Man, must consist in his being any ways assisted, encouraged, or improved in either of these Duties. So that then every Person is edified, when his Life and Practice is any thing amended, or his Knowledge of Religious Matters is more clear and perfect, or his Belief of them becomes more firm and settled, or when his Affections for them are more fervent, or his holy Resolutions and the Religious bent of his Heart are more unalterably establish'd, or his Conscience is more freed from Doubts, or fuller of Comfort and Joy in God, than it was before.

1. The chief Instance of any Particular Man's Edification, and that which, indeed, is the End of all the rest, is *when his Life and Practice is any thing amended*. And thus 'tis, when he is more Devout and resign'd to God, more Just and Charitable to all Men, more Humble, Temperate, and Mortified to this World, or improved in any other Parts of Good Life and Conversation. When he gains more Virtues, or gets a greater Degree of Constancy and Firmness in them, having fewer Escapes, and standing in harder Trials, and doing his

his Duty with more delight and easiness, than he was wont to do. This Amendment of Life is one way of Edifying. For St. Paul says of *Church-Censures*, whose End is Reformation of Manners, that they are *given for edification*, 2 Cor. 13. 10; and of *vain Questions and Disputes*, which make none the better Livers, that they do *not minister to godly edifying*, i. e. to Edification in Godliness. 1 Tim. 1. 4. Yea, it is the principal point, and the main thing in Edification. For the Religion of a Good Life is that which, thro' the Merits and Grace of Christ, must save us all at last, and which God will * look at in the Day of Judgment. It is the very End ^{* Rev. 20.} 13. and Accomplishment of Faith and Knowledge, for *by Works*, as St. James saith, *Faith is made perfect*. Jam. 2. 22. It is the Casting Point, and the One thing necessary in Religion; so that when Men seek to edifie in Religion, they must seek above all to be better'd and improved in Holy Living.

And when they seek to be edified in an Holy Life, that must not only be in some Parts and Virtues, but in the whole Compass and Extent of it. With Zeal for God, they must joyn Charity to their
their

their Neighbours, yea, even to their Enemies, and Men of most opposite Opinions. With a serious owning of Religion, Sobriety, and Temperance, they must joyn a Peaceable Temper, and Submission to their Governours. And with Obedience to the Higher Powers, and the Decency and Heartiness of Devotions, they must joyn all the Duties of Morality, of a sober and just Practice. This I note, because the World is generally prone to measure their Edifying in Religion, by their Edifying only in some Particulars: nay, alas! many times by their Edifying only in the Beloved Notes of a Party, whilst they are altogether barren and unprofitable, in the Broad Lines, and Great Instances of Morality. When a loose and debauch'd Man, for instance, shews himself a Favourer of the Dissenters, and espouses their Schism; how ready are several among them, and perhaps he himself is not the last in believing them, to cry him up for a Saint, and a Precious Person? And again, if a licentious wicked Liver shew a Zeal for the Churches Service, and for Submission to the King, (which are things as truly Good, as the other by mistake

mistake are supposed to be) how apt are others to overlook all his Vices, and, as if these were not only some, but all Vertues, to set him up for a Right Good Man. When any thing which Men count a Part of Religion is opposed, and they are put more concernedly to espouse and contend for it; because others unworthily sleight it, they fall oft-times too much to magnify it, and to place all Religion in it, and judge themselves or others to be Religious from it alone, whilst in other things they are irreli- giously Wicked. They magnify on all hands the things wherein they oppose each others, and make them the chief Notes of Vertue, and of the Religion of Persons. So that the Religion of a Good Life is too often drown'd in the Particu- lar Notes and Vertues of a Party; and so long as a Man is true to their Side, he passes for a Good Man, whether in the wide Compass of other Duties he be true or false to Almighty God.

But these Particular and Partial Notes are not the Standard of Edification, nor the way to measure our Improvement in Religion by. If we take any one particular Grace and Vertue, it is but one thing, not all Religion, and so

is but one Part, not the Whole of Edification. All the Duties of Good Life are equally Parts of Christianity, and are all necessary to our Salvation : and therefore as it is, and ought to be our Duty and Aim, to explain, and press them all ; so is it the Duty, and ought to be the Aim and Care of all our People, to learn and practise them all ; and then they must judge themselves to edify rightly, when they profit and improve in all of them.

2. A second Instance of Particular Mens Edification, is when their *Knowledge of Religious Matters is more clear and perfect*, or when their *Faith and Belief of them is more firmly settled*. And thus the *Apostle* tells us, that *Prophecy or Preaching* edifies, because it instructs and convinces Mens Understandings, and so improves Faith and Knowledge. *He that prophesies*, says he, *speaks unto Men to edification*, 1 Cor. 14. 3 ; he edifies those that hear him, because they are *taught*, and *convinced* by him, v. 19, 24. Whereas, on the contrary, *strange Tongues*, he says, are very *unedifying*, because *no Man understands them*, v. 2, 4.

And

And thus again a Man is edified in Religion, when he is in any ways improved in Light and Conviction, when he more clearly and fully understands the Doctrines and Duties of it, or is more undoubtedly persuaded of them. And this Improvement in Belief and Knowledge, he must not measure so much by the *Number*, as by the *Weight* and *Usefulness* of Particulars. It is no Edification at all, or next to none, to load our Understandings with an heap of nice, curious, and unprofitable things; to lose our selves in searching into Mysteries; to hunt after Conjectures, and scan doubtful Questions, about Angels, and the State of Separate Souls, and the Time of the World's ending, and God's Secret Will and Decrees, which are not necessary for us to know, and which perhaps no Man will be able to decide till God determine them. These things make us no better, nor holier. For nice Disputes, and curious Conjectures, and aery Notions, never strike down a Lust, or correct a Sin: they are light things that swim at top, and float only in the Brain, but never sink down into the Heart, or reform the Life of any Man. And since our Heart and Life is not
made

made better by them, they are very unedifying. For the End of all Faith and Knowledge, is to guide, and improve Good Life and Practice; so that then we truly edify in our Understandings, when we learn things of weight and use, which are like to affect our Hearts, and to direct, stir up, and help us on in the Course of a Godly Conversation. And thus it is, when we are instructed in the Great Articles of our *Creed*, about Almighty God, and Jesus Christ, and the Future Judgment, &c. and fully persuaded of them: When we are enlightened in all the Points of *Practice*, discerning plainly what is the Nature of all Particular Duties, and what is implied in them, and what Means are like to help us most in attaining of them, and what are the most powerful Motives and Encouragements to quicken our Care and Endeavours after them. When we are clearly inform'd in the Nature of Repentance, and in the Readiness of God's Holy Spirit and Grace to help on all our Good Endeavours, and in any other things, whereon either our Growth in Grace, or Peace of Conscience depends, and which are either necessary Parts, or helpful Means, or prevalent Motives to

Obedi-

Obedience. Our Minds, I say, are best edified, when they are stored with such useful things.

Especially, which is the only thing I will add further, if they have an *useful knowledge* of them; *i. e.* if they know them by *Plain and Clear Accounts*, and not under a Dress of *obscure Phrases*, and *Allegorical Descriptions*. For some Christians, especially among our Separating Brethren, think they are much edified in Spiritual Knowledge, when they have learn'd to talk much about *Christ*, or *Grace*, or the *Spirit*, or *Faith*, or *Regeneration*, or other most important Points, in dark Phrases, and far-fetch'd, and, very oft, improper Metaphors, and affected Allegories, which are very unfit for Definitions of things, and are not a way to improve and clear, but darken Knowledge. And when Men are improv'd only in such mysterious Speeches, which, though they may excite some good Affection, yet, I presume, can give no clear Apprehensions to their own Minds, since they are very puzzling when others, even the wisest, come to examine them: I think they cannot give them a Claim to any extraordinary Edification. For many fine Figures, and pretty Al-
legories

legories may be used in setting off a thing, and yet there shall not be much knowledge in them. They amuse the Mind with pleasing Ideas, and strike the Fancy with lucky Hints whilst they are recited; but they give us no just Apprehension of the thing, and upon examination, a Man shall find himself little the wiser, or more able to explain it unto others, after he has heard them.

3. A *Third Instance* of Particular Mens Edification, is when their *Affections for Religious Matters are made more Fervent*, or their *Holy Purposes are more unalterably fix'd and establish'd*. This exercise and increase of Religious Affection, and Godly Resolution, is another way of edifying. And so St. Paul says of him that *speaks in the Church in an unknown Tongue*, that he *edifies himself*, i. e. in Devout Prayers and Affections, (for such Enthusiasms were ordinarily express'd in Prayer and Praise— *he that speaks in an unknown Tongue, speaks not unto Men, but unto God*, v. 2. 1 Cor. 14. 4.) *And profitable communication, which ministers Grace*, i. e. a gracious Bent of Heart, and Good Affection to the Hearers, he says is good to the use of edifying, Eph. 4. 29. And their comforting
or

or * *exhorting themselves together* to be <sup>* παρακα-
λέτε.</sup> Firm and Resolute in the Faith of *Christ*, amidst all the Dangers and Persecutions which then environ'd it, he tells the *Thessalonians* is the way to *edify one another*, 1 Thes. 5. 11.

Good Resolution is the very Strength and Vigour of the Soul, which prepares it for Tryals; putting it upon all the Pains, and enabling it to conquer all the Difficulties in Religion. So that then we are mightily confirm'd in any Graces, when we are more resolute, and bent upon them. Especially, if this Resolution be not a rash Act, made hastily in some Religious Heat, but the Effect of serious and due Consideration: as it is, when we foresee the Pains and Self-denials which we are to undergo in any Duties; but yet, being fully convinc'd of the perfect Reasonableness, the absolute Necessity, and the incomparable Advantage of them, we absolutely resolve upon them notwithstanding.

And Fervor of Desire, and Devout Affection, will enable us more cheerfully, and strongly to resolve upon any Good thing. It will make us careful and intent to please God, and ready to deny our selves for his sake, and give us

not only Ease, but Pleasure and Delight in well-doing; it being natural for Men to be inwardly satisfied when they have what is desired, and take delight in things, when once they have an affection for them. So that then also we are furthered and edified in any Graces, when we are stirr'd up to a greater quickness in devout Affections, and find in our selves more ardent Desires, and a higher Passion for them. Especially, if these Affections were kindled in us, not only by pleasing Similitudes, and pretty Sayings, or solemn Looks, or melting Tones, or the Preacher's Passion and Vehemence; but by the Weight and awakening Force of the Reasons and Things themselves, which touch'd our Hearts, either when they came from him, or afterwards when we reflect and dwell upon them in our own Meditations. If we are put into a Religious Heat and good Affection, only by Voice and Vehemence, and the Shew and Solemnities of Action: that, indeed, is something, if a Wise Man have the government of it, who will apply it to the embettering of his Life, and fix and fortify his holy Resolution whilst that Religious Heat is upon him. Tho', I confess,

confess, if he stops in the Affection, and doth not take advantage thereby to be thus resolv'd; he is much more pleas'd than profited with it, and gains not much of Edification. But when the Conviction of our Understandings goes along with this Agitation of our Fancies in the affecting of our Hearts, and we are struck by considering the Greatness of the Motives, and the Weight of the Things: then we have such an holy Affection, as is much more strong and lasting, and more apt to edify us. When only Voice and Vehemence begot the Affection in us, a very small time will wear it off, as they wear out of our Fancies, which they will quickly do of themselves, or thro' our Fancies being diverted and taken up with other things. But when the Weight of Things and Arguments affect us: Those are embodied into our Minds and Judgments, and so are like to stay with us; and also mightily startle and convince our Consciences, and so are like to have great power over us. These Convictions are both *Potent*, and *Durable* things, which greatly affect us for the present, and stick by us to affect us equally when we reflect upon them at any time afterwards.

4. A *Fourth* Instance of Particular Mens Edification, is when their *Consciences are more freed from Doubts, and Scruples, and are fuller of Comfort and Joy in God, than they were before.* And thus the *weak Brother's* being confirm'd in Conscience (tho' that was in a wrong case) and emboldened, St. Paul calls his being edified. *If any see thee, who hast knowledge, sit at meat in the Idols Temple; shall not the Conscience of him that is weak, i. e. scruples to sit at meat there, be emboldened (the Word is * edified, i. e. made to lay aside his Doubts and Fears by the Authority of thy Example) and eat also? 1 Cor. 8. 10.*

* οἰκονομῶν
Ἰσχυίας.

Vexatious Scruples, and distrustful Fears, are the Pain and Sickness, the Swoonings and Faintings of a Religious Soul. They are a heavy Burden to it, putting it into great Uneasiness, Horror, and Disquietude: and also a great hindrance; for by disheartning, they beget a Feebleness, and break its Strength; they keep its Thoughts and Intention employ'd mainly upon themselves, which are things that do not profit, and detain them from making a progress in those which are truly good. And since Doubts and Despondencies are so truly
a Dis-

a Disease and Unhappiness to our Spirits, and so great a Discouragement and Stop to all Religious Service and Improvements; it must needs be an high part of Edification to be clearly resolv'd about Practical Cases, and to have Peace of Mind upon safe Grounds, and well-satisfied Consciences. So that then our Souls are much edified, when our Doubts are clear'd, and our Consciences truly resolv'd and comforted. And thus it is, when they are loaded with a just sense of necessary things, and freed from the Vexation of needless Scruples; when they are better satisfied, either about their *Duty*, being resolved whether some Doubtful Cases are either allowed or forbid by some Laws of God; or about the *Safety of their State*, being satisfied upon good Grounds of God's Favour and Acceptance of them, which will give them Peace and Joy in God, and comfortable Expectations.

And thus we see wherein lies the Edification of *Particular Men* and *Private Christians*, viz. in any *Confirmation or Improvement, either of Faith or Manners*. So that then a Private Person may know himself to be edified, when he gathers strength, and improves in the practice

of any, or of all Virtues; when he thrives in plain, and clear Understanding and Belief, especially of weighty and useful Things; when he is more fervent in Godly Affections, chiefly if they are accompanied with Convictions of Reason, and rais'd by powerful Arguments; when he is more unalterably fixed in virtuous, and holy Resolutions; more satisfied in Practical Cases, and Doubts of Conscience; or more comforted with Joy in God, and the Hopes of Eternal Happiness.

I proceed now,

2. To shew *wherein lies the Edification of the Whole Church, and that is mainly in the settled Peace and Union of its Members.*

Edification in the Scriptures doth principally, and most commonly refer to the *whole Church*. For it, as I have noted, is most usually stiled, and most properly resembled to a Building, since it contains in it such a Number of Particulars, which, as so many *live Stones*, as St. Peter says, *are built into this Spiritual House*, 1 Pet. 2. 5. And this Edification of the Church, or Body of Christians, is spoken of by St. Paul in the Text — *Seek that*

ye may excel to the edifying of the Church; and so again to the Ephesians—Christ gave Apostles and Prophets, &c. for the perfecting of the Saints, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ, Eph. 4. 11, 12.

Now this edifying of the whole Church, *lies mainly in the settled Peace and Union of its Members; and the Great instrument of that is Love, which makes us look, not altogether at our own things, but at the things of others.*

1. *The Edification of the whole Church, I say, lies mainly in the settled Peace and Union of its Members.* The Church indeed is edified in the Edification of its particular Members, when they grow in Faith and Manners; because it is not barely a *Body of Men*, but a *Body of Men professing Faith and Holiness*; so that then it is perfected and improved, when they grow in these Virtues. And so those Gifts which were most instructing, and most apt to improve Knowledge and Good Life, as *Prophecy*; are said here to be more for the Edification of the Church, than other Gifts less instructing, as *Tongues*. But the Edification peculiar to it, as it is *one Body*, and a *Church*, is the *Peace and Union of its Members*. For Peace and Unity edifies and builds up,
as

as Separation and Division dissolves and plucks asunder all Societies. The laying together and cementing Wood and Stones, builds up an House, and the dividing and scattering them abroad, pulls it down again ; and so do Unity, or Division, build up, or destroy all Communities. *A House, or City divided against it self, says our Saviour, shall not stand ; and every Kingdom divided against it self, is brought to Desolation, Matt. 12. 25.* So that the Edification of the Church, which consists of such a vast number of Members, is the keeping and establishing them in Unity and Peace ; and nothing is more opposite to edifying, than Schisms and Divisions. St. Jude opposes Edification to Separation. *These be they, who separate themselves—but, contrary to that, Ye Beloved, building up your selves on your most Holy Faith, &c.* intimating, that to edify or build up, they must forbear to Separate, *Jude v. 19, 20.* St. Luke says the Churches were edified, when they ceased to be Persecuted and Dispersed, and were suffered to be settled and united. *Then, says he, had the Churches rest, throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, Acts 9. 31.* Where, by Edified, I think we may well understand

stand their being settled in Peace, and establish'd; not only, because their *Rest* is given as the reason of it, to intimate that then they were edified when they were no longer scattered; but also because the *increase in Grace and Spiritual Comfort* (the other meaning of Edification) is mentioned besides and added to it—*were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied, v. 31.* And St. Paul says the Church edifies it self, not only when by the supply of all the Parts, there is an *increase in Goodness*, but when moreover it preserves *Unity*, and the *Whole Body is compacted* by what every Part supplies: So that Edification must imply Unity and Compactness in the Body, as well as other instances of Personal and Private Virtue. *From Christ*, says he, *the whole Body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joint supplies, makes increase of the Body unto the edifying of it self, Eph. 4. 16.*

Thus in the *Scripture-Notion* doth the Edification of the Church consist in the Unity, Peace, and Compactness of its Members. And this St. Paul plainly teaches, when he exhorts to *Follow after the things which make for Peace*, because it
is

is with them we must *edify one another*. Rom. 14. 19. And when he ascribes Edification to *Charity*, that Great Bond of Peace and Union——'tis *Charity*, says he, *that Edifies*, 1 Cor. 8. 1. And thus *Theophylact* well explains the *Scripture-Notion*.

* Πᾶσα ἡ οἰκοδομὴ, τετέστι πάντες οἱ πρὸς συναρμολογούμενοι καὶ ἐνόμενοι Theoph. in Eph. 2. v. 22.

† Ἡ γνώσις βλάπτει φυσικοῦ καὶ ὀγκύσει τὸν ἔχοντα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀπορρίπτει αὐτὸν τῇ πλησίον μέλει, εἰὰν μὴ καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ἔχη μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἥτις ἀγάπη τοῦναντίον οἰκοδομεῖν δύναται. Theoph. in 1 Cor. 8. 1.

* *The Building*, says he, *that is*, *all the Faithful compacted and united into one Body*: So that in his Sense the Church is then Built up, when it is compacted and united. And again, † *Knowledge without Charity puffs up and swells, and by that means divides from other Members, and makes a Schism*: Whereas,

on the contrary, Charity edifies (opposing Edification to Separation) i. e. maintains Union.

2. And the great instrument of this Peace and Union is Love, which makes us look, not altogether at our own Things, but at the Things of others. If Men seek only themselves, and will use nothing but what seems best to their own Fancies, and works most upon their own Humours and Affections, it is not possible that there should be Peace and Unity in any Church. For there is almost as great a diver-

diversity in Fancies and Affections, especially about lesser matters, as there is in Faces; and it is never to be expected, that, in such cases, all Men should like and approve of the same things, more than that all Palates should be pleas'd with the same Meats and Sauces. So that whilst every Man will please himself, and gratify his own Humour, there is not like to be any Union and Edification of the Church. But that which works this Peace and Union, must be Love of others. *The Body increases*, saith St. Paul, *by the supply from every Part, to the edifying of it self in Love*, Eph. 4. 16. And whereas *Knowledge puffs up*, and cares not, tho' we lose others: *Charity*, saith he, *edifies*, i. e. preserves Peace in the Church, and keeps together all its Members. 1 Cor. 8. 1.

* *The Members of Christ*, saith St. Austin, *are coupled to each other by the Charity of Union*, it being Love which unites them; *and by the same Charity they cohere to Christ their Head too*. 'Tis Love that is the Publick-spirited Virtue, which, as the *Apostle* says, *seeks not her own*, 1 Cor. 13. 5.

* — Unde utique manifestum est, eum, qui non est in membris Christi, Christianam salutem habere non posse. Membra vero Christi per unitatis charitatem sibi copulantur, & per eandem capiti suo coherent, quod est Christus Jesus. Aug. de Unit. Eccl. cont. Ep. Petil. Donat. c. 2.

and

and carries us to deny our selves out of care and kindness for our Brethren. And this *care of others* is the only thing which can maintain Unity, and prevent *Schism*. *The Members must have the same care one of another, saith St. Paul, that there be no Schism in the Body, 1 Cor. 12. 25.*

And thus also it appears wherein lies the Edification of the whole Church, namely, *in the settled Peace and Unity of all its Members.* For the Church, being a Spiritual House, is edified and built up by Unity and Peace, but pluck'd down and broke to pieces by Divisions and Separations. And this Peace and Unity is not to be had whilst we all seek to please our selves, but only by Love, which is a Self-denying Virtue, and the care of others.

And thus having explain'd both the Edification of particular Men in Faith and Manners, and of the whole Church in the settled Peace and Unity of all its Members: I proceed in the

3^d. And last Place, to shew, that *this latter is to be preferr'd, and must give Laws and Limitations to all means of promoting the former:* So that no man must ever seek to edify in *Schism*, or break the Peace
of

of a confessedly sound and lawful, much less of an excellent and very edifying Church, upon Pretence that he can edify more in separate Meetings.

The latter of these, I say, is to be preferr'd, and must give Laws to all means of promoting the former, and particular Mens using any ways, or seeking any helps to edify in particular Graces, must always be in subordination to the Unity and Edification of the Church.

As for all the Duties of Christianity, they are bound to them absolutely, and no care of maintaining Peace and Unity must ever draw them to forego them. So that when any Sins are required in any Church as the Conditions of Communion, as *Adoration of the Host, Worship of Images, and Profession of false Articles* are in the Church of Rome, though thereby they break the Peace and Unity of that particular Church, yet must every private Christian stand out, and not comply with them. For such Peace with that particular Church, upon such corrupt terms, were nothing less than entering into a Conspiracy, both against the Universal Church which disclaims these Corruptions, and against Jesus Christ the Head of it, seeing it is upon Conditions expressly forbid by his Laws.

But

But when all these Doctrines and Duties of Christianity are left free, nay, openly taught and pressed on all Men, which in Truth is, and our Brethren confess to be our Case: then, as for *all the helps and outward opportunities of improving them, as what Prayers they shall use, and what Sermons they shall hear,* and such like; these must give way to publick Ends, and be subordinate to the Churches Edification. To use the best Prayers, and hear the best Sermons, and be under the most edifying Helps, are very desirable things indeed; and he is very careless of his own Soul, who, when he wants them, doth not seek them if they may be had; and unthankful to Almighty God, if he doth not prize and value them when he is placed under them. But when we desire, and, in all Peaceable ways, endeavour to have as good as we can; we must at the same time be content to take up with such as we may have, and not separate and divide the Church to find better. We may be sensible of the want, and of our great unhappiness under a less edifying means in any Church, when that is truly the Case (though, God be thanked, however our Brethren mistake it, it is not so with

with us) and both wish and fairly endeavour to remove the unhappiness. But when we are sensible of them, and wish they were removed, we must not fall into Schism to remove them, nor break the Peace and Unity of the Church for better means of private Edification.

To evince this, I observe,

1. If a Man breaks Unity and publick Peace for better means of private Profiting, he cannot be said so much as to improve in private Edification.

If we allow all Men to reject the establish'd Means, which stand by publick Wisdom, and to chuse any which they fancy better at their own Discretion; they will not be likely to chuse such as are really more edifying. I know 'tis Natural for Men to think well of themselves; and that, unless they are wise, they will be apt to fancy he undervalues them, who would beget in them an humble Opinion of their own Judgments. But in truth, the generality of Men are unmeet, and ill Judges in these things; so that to set them free from the publick Means, and bid them chuse better for themselves, is not the way to put
P them

them under such as are more profitable for them. For some would still be changing for *variety's* sake, not to have a *more useful*, but a *New Man*: it being the Property of itching Ears, as well as of wanton Appetites, to be cloy'd with the best Entertainments when they are held to them, and never to like of any thing long. And others would think to edify *more*, by those which really are *less* edifying. They would too often chuse to themselves a Pastor, either from his Gesture and Actions, the cadence of his Voice, his Zeal and Vehemence; or from his abounding in affecting Phrases, and taking Similitudes; or from his Preaching pleasing things, and insisting most on their beloved Opinions: and for their sakes reject others, who treat of more useful and weighty Matters, and lay out the great Points of Religion in all plainness, and speak more to Mens Consciences, whose Discourses, though less pleasing, perhaps, to some Fancies, are yet, I am sure, the more profitable Sermons. The greatest number of Hearers are observed to be very injudicious in their choice and applause of Teachers, and to prefer those who can do them less good, before such

as

as are really fitted to do more. This is observ'd by Men of the best esteem a-

mong our * Brethren, as well as by others amongst us. And 'tis no wonder it should be so observable of other Hearers, when the *Apostles* tell us the very same of the *Corinthians* in his own case. He was qualified, sure, in all respects, as one of the most Powerful and Edifying Teachers, and the *Corinthians* had known him well enough to see it, and believe so of him. But yet, such Judges were several among them, of edifying Preaching, as to prefer others before him, and desire rather to be under their Ministry than his, which put him upon speaking so much in his own Praise, as he doth *2 Cor. c. 11. and c. 12.* So that, if all Men were set loose from the means appointed by publick Wisdom, and were left to chuse better for themselves; since the generality are such unfit Judges in this

P 2

* It grieves my very Soul to think, what pitiful, raw, and ignorant kind of Preaching, is crowded most after in many places, for the mere affectionate manner of expression, and loudness of the Preacher's voice. How oft have I known the ablest Preachers undervalu'd, and an ignorant Man by Crowds applauded, when I that have been acquainted with the Preacher ab incunabulis, have known him to be unable well to answer most Questions in the common Catechism? Mr. Baxter *Cure of Ch. Divis. p. 215.* And again--The World's experience puts it past doubt, that the generality of the Vulgar, Unlearned and Injudicious sort of Men, do value a Man by his Tone and Voice, more than for the Judgment and Excellency of his Matter; if not put off by such Advantage Id. *Def. of Cure Ch. Divis. p. 108, 109.* Also *Hilderth. Lect. 38. on Jo. 4. p. 270.*

case,

case, they would not ordinarily chuse such means, as would more profit them.

But if they were all so wise, as to fix on proper means, and, when they reject the establish'd Helps, chuse such instead of them as really are more edifying; yet if they break the publick Peace to come at them, they cannot account themselves to improve in private Edification. If a Man breaks *Peace* to improve in *Knowledge*, he loses more than he gets; for in Christianity Love is better than Learning, and a peaceable Temper in the Eyes of God of higher Price, than a skillful Understanding. *Covet earnestly the best Gifts* (among which *Prophecy* and *Knowledge* must have * Preference) *and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way to be coveted beyond all of them, viz. the way of Charity, which he begins there to treat of, 1 Cor. 12. 31.* If he dissolves Unity and incurs Schism, to profit better in some other Duties of a Christian; he takes a very mistaken Course, since Love and Unity are most especially recommended, and are the very Chief of them. *If it be possible, and as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men, Rom. 12. 18. Above all things, my Brethren, put on Charity, which is the very bond of per-*

* 1 Cor. 14.
1, 5.

perfectness; i. e. most perfect in it self, and that which perfects all other Vertues. Col. 3. 14. *And above all things, have fervent Charity among your selves, for Charity shall cover the multitude of sins*; i. e. it shall stand you in more stead at the Great Day, than any other Duties. 1 Pet. 4. 8. *And now abideth Faith, Hope, and Charity, these three, all Chief and Cardinal Graces, but the greatest of these is Charity*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. Thus are Love, and Peace, and Unity, the very top of Christian Duties, and the most edifying things in all private Persons; so that they are first to be secured, and must not be parted with, in hopes thereby to improve in any others.

Nay, without them we cannot edify in any others to any purpose. For if we throw aside Charity, which *seeks not her own*, but has a care of other Men, v. 5. (and that *care of others*, as he declared * just before, will keep out Schism) the * C. 12. v. greatest Proficiency in Knowledge, or other²⁵ Vertues, is unprofitable and useless. We have no profit at all by Knowledge, or other Accomplishments of our Understandings. *Tho' I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and have all Knowledge, and the Tongues of Men and Angels, and Faith*

to remove Mountains, if after all I have no Charity; it profits me nothing, 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2. Nay, we have no profit by the bravest Actions, but even the best and costliest things we do, (a sad Case, God knows) are thrown away, and will not avail to save us. Tho' I am Heroically liberal in Alms, and, leaving my self naked, bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor; yea, tho' I die for Religion, and give my body to be burned a Martyr; yet, if I have not Charity, it profits me nothing, v. 3. So true was that Observation of the Primitive Christians, that wilful Schism, that consummate Breach of Charity and Union, is the same among other Vertues, that the dead Fly is among the costliest Oynt-

* Tales etiam si occisi in confessione nominis fuerint, macula ista nec sanguine abluitur. Inexpiables & Gravis culpa Discordiæ, nec Passione purgatur. — Ardeant licet flammis & ignibus tradite, vel objecti Bestiis animas suas ponant; non erit illa fidei corona, sed Poena Perfidiae, &c. — Occidit talis potest, coronari non potest. — Esse Martyr non potest, qui in Ecclesia non est. Cyp de Unit. Eccles. p. 113, 114. Ed. Ox.

*ments; it will mar all that any Man doth, and is not to be expiated by any thing, no, not by Martyrdom. * Schismatics, says St. Cyprian, tho' they are slain for confessing Christ, yet is the stain of Schism so deep, their very Blood cannot wash it out. It is an inexpressible Crime, from which a Man cannot be purg'd, tho' he dies for Christ. — Let him give himself to fry in the Flames, or be*

tore

tore in pieces by Wild Beasts ; that shall not crown his Faith with Victory, but pass only for the Punishment of his Treachery. — He may be slaughter'd, but he shall not be crown'd. — For he cannot be one of Christ's Martyrs, who is not one of the Church's Members.

Thus are Charity, Peace and Unity, the most excellent, and edifying things in every private Christian ; nay, of that necessity, that no other Gifts or Graces, not the deepest Knowledge, nor the noblest Alms, nor Martyrdom it self, are of any use, or able to profit us without them. So that when to edify in other Duties, Men transgress them, they give away more than they get, and are not so truly advanc'd forward as set back, and so cannot pretend to go on in Private Edification.

But besides, that they are thus really made worse as Private Christians, I observe,

2. That if they were as much improved, as really they are hindred, yet would it by no means be lawful for them to make a Schism, and break the Peace and Unity of the Church to be better edified : For tho' it be well, that Men should seek to edify and profit themselves in parti-

cular Vertues, and do this with care, seeking after the best means; yet at the same time it is equally true also, that in so doing they must secure the Peace and Edification of the whole Church. They must not be so zealous for any means of better edifying and profiting themselves, as for its sake to make a Rent in the Church, and create Publick Disturbance.

And this may appear for these Reasons:

1. Because it is against the Fundamental Law of all Societies, which is, That no Man shall seek his own Private Profit and Enrichment, by the Publick Loss and Dissettlement. And particularly, 'tis against the Laws which Christ has made for the Peace and Preservation of his Church, who engages his Members to forego their own Private Profit for the Publick Peace and Benefit, more than any others.

2. This breaking Unity to redress and supply less edifying Means in the Church, is like Sedition in the State for Redress of Civil Defects and Grievances, and subject to a like Condemnation.

3. 'Tis against the End even of the best Helps and Means of Edification, which is to establish Peace and keep out Schism, and so
are

are utterly perverted when they are made the Ground of Separation.

4. When the Corinthians broke the Unity of the Church on this Ground, the Apostle charg'd the great Sin of Schism upon them.

5. If this Pretence would acquit from Schism, there can be no such thing as Unity in the Church, nor any stop to Separation.

1. I say, thus to break Unity and Publick Peace, only that we may have better means to edify and profit our selves in private Vertues, is against the Fundamental Law of all Societies, which is, That no Man shall seek his own private Profit and Enrichment, by the publick Loss and Dissettlement.

The Publick Interest in all reason deserves to be more regarded, than any Man's Private Benefit. For it is infinitely of greater weight, and contains more in it: So that if any private profiting may claim to be pursued, the publick much more, wherein every single Man's share weighs as much as that, and has the vast number of all the rest added to it. And the subsistence of all Society and good Order requires that it should be so preferr'd, since otherwise it

it would evermore be some Man's turn, for his own particular Profit's sake, to break it. And when any Men embody, and combine in Societies, by so doing they all virtually ingage, and profess to do it. And in all Communities he really is, and is generally held to be an ill Man, who doth otherwise. He is a bad Member in a Family, who will please himself in some unmeet or unseasonable delight, to the disturbance of the whole Household. And he is an ill Man in any Neighbourhood, and a bad Subject in any Country, who will seek his own private Gain and Emolument, tho' it be at the general Loss, and when the Publick suffers by it. It is ill in any Member, for some private End, to bring any Detriment to the Publick; but especially to make Seditions, and break the Peace and Unity, which is the Ligament by which it stands, for that is the Civil Death and Dissolution of it.

But as this is against the Fundamental Law of all Communities; so particularly *against the Laws which Christ has made for the Peace and Preservation of his Church, who obliges his Members to forego their own Private Profit for Publick Peace and Benefit, more than any others.* He puts us in mind,

mind, that we stand in his Church, not as independent Individuals, who have only our own Gain to look to, but as Parts and Members.— *God has made us the Body of Christ*, says St. Paul, and *Members in particular*, 1 Cor. 12. 27. And being *Fellow-members*, he would have that beget in us a general care of all that are the same Body with us, making us sensible, not only of our own, but of others wants, and ready to deny our selves, or forego our own pleasure or profit, for their advantage. *If one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it; or if one be honoured, saith he, all the rest rejoyce with it*, v. 26. *And the Members should have the same care one of another*, v. 25. *And let no Man seek his own, but every Man another's Wealth*, 1 Cor. 10. 24. And this looking beyond our selves, and having a mutual care of others, will keep us from all Schisms, and dividing the Church for our particular satisfaction or advantage. *When the Members have the same care one of another, there will be no Schism in the Body*, v. 25. Among all the Duties which he has injoyn'd, he lays greatest weight, as I have observ'd, on those which make for Love and Peace, so that they must be secured in the first place: they are set
as

as the Ruling Virtues, which must give Laws; which utterly excludes all Plea of breaking them, upon pretence of greater Profiting in any others: In Religious Matters, says the Apostle, *let us follow after the things which make for Peace, and things whereby one may edify another, Rom. 14. 19.* Above all things, says he again, *put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness: i. e.* which by binding us together, perfects us; for all other Graces are imperfect, as I before noted, without Unity and Peace, and it must be added to them to gain acceptance. *Col. 3. 14.* And *let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts, whereto you are also called in one Body: i. e.* of all others Peace must give Laws, and be the Ruling Virtue, because it secures that which is the greatest Profit, and most to be aim'd at in all Societies, viz. *Unity, v. 15.*

Thus are Men in all Societies, and the Members of Christ's Church more than any, oblig'd to be most tender of Publick Benefit and Peace, and to deny themselves in any Private Interests and Advantages, rather than in pursuit of them, to break Unity and work Publick Disturbance. When they are Members of Publick Bodies, they must have Publick

lick Spirits, and not seek their own Benefit against the Benefit of the Community. So that if any Man seeks only to please himself, and to carry on his own Profit and Satisfaction, he can only be Good then, when there is none in the World besides himself, and he lives alone, but he is an ill Man, and an awkward mis-form'd Member in all Society and Communion.

2. *This breaking Unity to redress and supply less edifying Means in the Church, is like Sedition in the State for redress of Civil Defects and Grievances, and subject to a like Condemnation.*

What *Sedition* is in the Civil State, that *Schism* is in the Church of Christ. It breaks one Society into many Pieces, and makes them no longer one Body, but so many several Bodies as there are disjoyned Parties. And therefore Church-Schisms are call'd *Seditions*, both by St. Paul — *the Works of the Flesh are Heresies, Seditions*, i. e. Heresies and Schisms, Gal. 5. 20. and by St. Clement ordinarily, and other Apostolical Writers.

And when this is made in any Church for Means of better Edification, because the establish'd Helps happen to have
some

some Defects, and are not so fitted to our Profit as we would have them : It is such another way of Redress, as when a Sedition is made in a State, to remedy the Defects and Grievances of any Kingdom. In both which, as the Remedy is most *sinful*, being such an high and open Breach of Peace, which God has made the most sacred of all Duties : so is it withal most foolish, and a way of Cure incomparably worse than the Disease. For surely the tearing Things to pieces, is the worst way of mending Faults ; and Sedition, and the utter loss of Peace, are among the worst of Grievances that can befall any Communities.

3. 'Tis against the End even of the best Helps and Means of Edification, which is to establish Peace, and keep out Schism ; and so are utterly perverted when they are made the Ground of Separation.

As for Private Graces and Improvements themselves, the Exercise even of them is oft-times subject to this End, and they are always best and most perfect, when they are so used, as that we may not only profit our selves with them, but edify the Church too. Love and Peace are the Ruling Vertues, as I have shew'd, which

which must guide the rest, and the Great End whereto all others must be made subservient. This Rule St. *Paul* gives the *Corinthians* for the management of themselves in other Duties — *Let all your things be done with Charity*; so that even other Duties are in danger of losing their Grace, when they are exercised uncharitably. 1 Cor. 16. 14. And the Exercise of *Devotion*, even in inspired *Prayers* and *Hymns* when Men were acted by them, he tells them must be with a deference to Peace and Publick Edification. *Every one*, saith he, *hath a Psalm, but let all things be done to edifying*, 1 Cor. 14. 26.

But as for all the *outward Means* and *Helps of edifying* in these Private Graces, they are more absolutely subservient to Peace, and must be so used for profiting Private Men, as that they be sure at the same time to edify the whole Church, and maintain Union.

These Means of Edification, are either those *Publick Officers* whom God has appointed in his Church, or those *Gifts* which he bestows upon them for the Edification of Believers. And tho' it be a great Design of both these, to edify particular Persons in Faith, and Practice; yet

yet is it an higher End to edify the whole Church in Peace and Unity, and keep out Schisms.

1. This Edification of the whole Church, and preserving Peace and Unity, is the main End of *Gifts*. Thus we are told of *Knowledge*, which St. Paul rejects when it is used only to build up and please our selves, and is not govern'd by *Charity* that *edifies* others, 1 Cor. 8. 1. And thus also of *Prophecy* or Preaching, that great Means of Edifying Believers. For tho' it was then an *extraordinary* and *inspired Gift*, yet was it to be limited by Publick Ends, and the Spirit of Prophecy, was to be stinted and suppressed, when it came unseasonably upon them in the Church, and, by moving several to speak at the same time, bred Confusion and Publick Disturbance. *The Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets*, i. e. to govern them in subserviency to the Churches Peace: *For God is not the Author of Confusion*, i. e. he bestows no Gifts to serve that End, *but of Peace, as in all Churches of the Saints*, 1 Cor. 14. 32, 33. And to name no more in this case, St. Paul, as I have shewed, makes *Charity*, that uniting Virtue, and sure Obstacle of all Schisms,

the

the most * *excellent of all Gifts*. So that * 1 Cor. 12: 13. when the gifted Men themselves are zealous to exercise their Gifts, or when others are zealous to be under them; they must both have a higher Zeal to shew their Charity, and maintain it in the first place. *Follow after Charity*, says he again, *and desire Spiritual Gifts*: So that in all exercise and pursuit of them, they must not fail to follow Love, and take it along with them, 1 Cor. 14. 1.

2. It is also the great End of those Officers, whom God has appointed and empower'd, and whom he has endow'd with these Gifts for the Edification of his Church; such as *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers*. For they are given, says St. Paul, *for the perfecting of the Saints, and the edifying of the Body of Christ*, Eph. 4. 11, 12. They are given for the *perfecting of the Saints*, i. e. for the edifying particular Christians in Faith and Practice: but yet so as to be given also for the *edifying of the Body of Christ, till we come in the Unity of the Faith to a perfect Man*. So that when these Officers seek to edify particular Believers, they must be sure at the same time to secure another End, i. e. the Edification of the Body, and Unity of the Church.

Church. They are *given as Members*, which shews evidently that they must make up but one Body, and keep Unity with the other Parts: Nay, they are *given as joynts*, which are the very Ligaments of Union and Compactness.

These Officers are *given as Members of the Church*, and that shews they must make up one Body, and keep Unity with the other parts. For the Unity of the Body is to be the care of all the Members, especially of those which excel in Gifts, or are highest in Dignity and Office. Thus it is, as the Apostle observes, *1 Cor. 12.* in the *Natural Body*. It has several Members very different in Endowments, and destined, some to more, some to less honourable Offices. But because of this difference, the more able and honourable Members do not set up for themselves, and seek a Separate Profit or Applause, or make a Schism, and divide from others. Tho' there be *many Members*, says he, they all make up *but one Body*, v. 20. *And the Eye*, tho' a more Honourable Member, cannot separate Interests, or *say to the Hand*, (tho' less Honourable) *I have no need of thee: nor again the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you*, v. 21. And none seek
only

only themselves, which would cause Divisions; but they have all the same care one for another; if one suffer, all the rest suffering with it; or if one be honoured, all the rest rejoicing with it; that there may be no Schism in the Body, v. 25, 26. And like to this in Natural Bodies, is the difference of Officers in the Church. Tho' that have variety of Gifts, as Wisdom, Knowledge, Prophecy, Faith, Miracles, &c. v. 8, 9, 10. And variety of Officers and Ministers, some gifted more, some less; some higher, some lower in Authority than others: for there are differences of Administrations, v. 5. God having set first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that Miracles, and Gifts of Healing; i. e. Persons endow'd with them, Helps, (i. e. some distributing Charity, as Deacons, or attending on the Impotent and Orphans) Governments as Bishops and Presbyters, Diversities of Tongues, v. 28. Tho', I say, in the Church there be this difference, both of Gifts and Ministries; yet must not those differently Gifted, or Authorized Officers, draw different ways, and form divided Parties, but all aim at the Unity of the whole Body as its Natural Members. As all the Members in the Body Na-

tural are one Body; so also is Christ, the different Ministeries and Members making but one Body in him likewise, v. 12. And the several Ministeries, as Apostles, Prophets, &c. are all the Body of Christ, says he, and Members in particular, which therefore must cement together, and not fall off and divide from each other, v. 27, 28. And, as we have many Members in one Body Natural, and yet all these Members, tho' the Body be but one, have not one and the same Office, more than these Members of the Church: So we being many Members and Officers (the variety whereof is described, v. 6, 7, 8.) are still to be but one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another, (the difference in Offices giving no more liberty to divide the Church, than the same difference in the Natural Members doth to divide the Natural Body) Rom. 12. 4, 5.

Nay, these Officers are not set only as Members, which, as we have seen, is enough to prevent Schism; but they are set in the Church as joynts, which are to compact all the other parts, and are the very Bonds and Ligaments of Union. The whole Body, says St. Paul, fitly joyned together; and compacted by that which every joynt

joynt supplies, Eph. 4. 16. Every joynt, *i. e.* every Officer and Church-governour; for in them the other Members are joynted and united to one another. And since they are joynts, they must fasten and unite all the other parts together, not rear them from each other; what *they supply*, says the Apostle, must compact the Body, and therefore must in no wise divide it, and out of one make many. So that as for the extraordinary Abilities, and edifying Power of some Pastors and Teachers, it must never occasion or head Schisms and Divisions. But must be so applied by them, and so sought to by others; that whilst it labours to build up Faith and Good Life in particular Persons, at the same time it build up Unity in the Church and Body of Christ. When an increase is endeavour'd, by the effectual working in every part; that must be in such measure, as the Apostle says again, as secures the whole Body, and consists with Publick Peace and Settlement. *The effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the Body to the edifying it self in Love*, Eph. 4. 16.

The Nature of

4. *When the Corinthians broke the Unity of the Church on this pretence of greater profiting, the Apostle charges the great Sin of Schism upon them.*

Under their Divisions they had this to plead, that the common Means were unedifying, and that the Publick Assemblies were not so ordered, as that they might receive the greatest profit by them. *When they came together, every one had a new inspired Psalm, or a Doctrine, or a Revelation, or an Interpretation; the uttering whereof all at once, bred nothing but confusion, and was not, as he says, a doing things unto edifying, 1 Cor. 14. 26.* They were generally so forward to shew their *Gifts of Tongues*, that every one in the Assembly, who could, was for uttering a *Prayer*, or a *Revelation*, or an *Exposition in a strange Language*. And this made their *Understanding unfruitful* unto others, v. 14. So that *the unlearned, not understanding what was said, could not say Amen at their giving of thanks, v. 16.* that the *Speaker only edified himself, v. 4.* but that the *Congregation was not edified, v. 17.*

Nay, there was then, not only much unedifyingness in their Publick Assemblies, but they divided on this pretence,

to associate themselves with more edifying Teachers. They were *Zealous*, as my Text says, *of Spiritual Gifts*, and mighty Admirers of Gifted Men, but very prone to slight others, who were inferior to them. They were all for setting up the most powerful and edifying Pastors—they *gloried in Men*, 1 Cor. 3. 21. They would flock to those whom they most admired, where they thought to edify most, and become their Followers, but would separate from others—they *were puffed up for one against another*, 1 Cor. 4. 6. Yea, for the sake of their admired Teachers, they would disparage even St. Paul himself, alledging that he was *rude in speech*, i. e. made less elegant, clear, and edifying Sermons; and less gifted, than some other more followed Ministers, 2 Cor. 11. 4, 6. which put him upon speaking so much in his own defence and commendation, as he doth, 2 Cor. c. 11. and c. 12. For so he excuses all that glorying, and setting forth his own Praises—I *am become a fool in glorying*, but by such unjust preferring them above me, *ye have compelled me*, 2 Cor. 12. 11. But when they broke the Unity of the Church, and burst thus into Strife and Division to set up the most

Powerful Gifted Men, and seek better means of edifying: he tells them that they are guilty of the great Sin of Schism. *Whereas there are among you these Divisions, tho' shelter'd under these pretences; ye are Carnal, and walk as Men,* 1 Cor. 3. 3.

5. And lastly, *If this Pretence of Edifying better by the Rent which they make, be a good and warrantable Reason for it, there can be no such thing as Unity in the Church, nor any stop to Separations.* For this Pretence will serve almost all Men, and that almost at all times, to break loose, so that no fast hold can be taken of them in any Church. If the Rule be, to break off from others, and still to unite with that Teacher by whom he edifies most: The next Question is, Who shall judge who that is; and that must be every Man for himself, for every Man seems best able to tell his own Gains by what he finds, and one is not a fit Judge of another's Profit. And when every Man must seek a Teacher whom he fancies most, tho' in opposition to such as the Law has appointed; since mens Fancies are infinitely various in this Point, how can there be any Bond of Union in any Neigh-

Neighbourhood? For one is most pleas'd with melting Tones, and Voice, and Vehemence ; another with pretty Sayings, choice Similitudes, and affected Allegories, thinking there lies much Spirituality in affecting Phrases ; a third thinks Figures and Phrases only amuse the Fancy, but darken Knowledge, and is for hearing weighty and useful Things deliver'd in intelligible and plain Discourses. In Sermons, some seek witty Conceits, and Resemblances ; others, Ostentation of Learning in citation of Authors, and Greek and Latin Sentences : Some again think lightly of both these, and seek more to be inform'd in deep and mysterious Points, or to be fed with Discoveries of new Notions ; others, to hear a clear State of hard Cases ; a third prefers the most pathetical, moving Preachers ; a fourth is for the subtlest Disputants, who shew most Dexterity and Skill in Controversies. Thus various are Mens Judgments in these things. And therefore, if every Man be at liberty to chuse that Preacher, by whom he edifies most in what he fancies best, there is not like to be any settled Union in Parishes or Churches. Nay, the same Man will not be at Unity with himself
at

at different times. For Mens Humours, and Opinions of these Matters daily alter ; and when they change, by this Rule they must also change their Teachers ; and so are never like to be true and constant, even to their own admired Congregations. If Men then are free to leave the Establish'd Ministry, and to adhere to any whom they think they can hear more profitably ; 'tis plain that the Church can be no such thing, as the

* Eph 4 4. *Scripture* every-where * declares it is, Col. 3. 15. viz. *One Body*.

And thus upon all these Accounts it appears, that the Edification and Unity of the Church must be preferr'd, and sought in the first place, and limit us in seeking out the best Means and Helps of Edifying in particular Virtues. So that we must never seek to supply supposed Defects, and get better Means of Private Edifying by a Schism. We may labour after them as we can in all Peaceable ways ; but must in no wise for their sakes break the Unity of the Church, and make Divisions. For this, as I have shewn, is against the Fundamental Law of all Communities, which forbids Men to seek their own Private Profit at the Publick Loss ; it is against the Fundamental

mental Laws of Christ's Church, who engages all his Members to deny themselves, and to forego their Private Profit for Publick Peace, and to be careful of it before all other Duties; it is like raising Sedition in the Civil State for Redress of Grievances, which is a most Foolish, as well as Sinful Course; it is an utter perverting of the true End of all Helps and Means of Edifying, whose main Design is to maintain Peace and prevent Schisms; it makes Separation endless, and renders it impossible that there should be any such thing as Unity in the Church; and when Men have divided the Church on this Pretence, they have been charg'd with the great Sin of Schism in the Holy Scriptures. So that in seeking the best Means of Private Edification, every Good Man must stop in Peaceable Ways, which are the only Ways that are Innocent; yea, and the Ways that are best too, all things consider'd, and the Benefit of Peace being cast into the Scales, tho' some others should happen to be better when consider'd abstractly in themselves. And therefore no Conscientious or Wise Man, must ever attempt to procure a Means more edifying to himself by Separation.

From

From this it may plainly appear, how unwarrantably our Dissenting Brethren act in Separating from us, whom they confess to be a *sound* and *lawful* Church, upon pretence that they can edify more in Separate Meetings. To satisfy them wherein, it may be very fit to consider,

1. *Whether that is indeed true, which is supposed by them, viz. That their Preaching is in it self fitter than ours is for Edification.* It is an invidious thing to make Comparisons, especially when they are to commend our selves: but we may very innocently, and inoffensively admonish them, to examine this Point well before they pronounce thus of it: Do they come to hear us, before they complain of the unedifyingness of our Sermons? And if they come at all, is it only now and then by fits, or often, if not constantly, for so long at least, till they have heard all the Parts, and so can comprehend the whole Design, and bear away the Connexion of our Discourses? And when they are at Church, do they give diligent heed, and attend to what we say? And in attending, do they hear us without prejudice against our Persons, and a design to find faults, and pick

pick up something to complain of? Yea, what is more, do they hear us, as I presume they do their own Teachers, with Reverence and composed Thoughts, which greatly prepare the Mind to profit and edify by any Discourses, and which, tho' sometimes perhaps underserv'd by the Preacher's Skill and Eloquence, are yet always most due to the Religion and Solemnity of the Service, and are Tempers that all Men ought to put on, whilst others are speaking to them in God's Name, and delivering his Message? And after they have heard, do they give themselves the trouble to make what they heard their own, and apt to stick by them and affect them, by meditating upon it, and applying it to themselves, and so bringing it close to their own Consciences? Without this Honesty and Impartiality, and Godly care in hearing, they would not be edified if the Holy Ghost himself were to preach to them; and when Christ himself was upon Earth, his Sermons were unprofitable, and did not edify the generality of his Hearers, for the want of them: and if they are in the same fault in hearing us, no wonder they are little edified by our Preaching. And after all
this,

this, when they pass Sentence, by what Rule do they try the profitableness of our Discourses? Do they judge a Sermon edifying, only as it speaks according to their Opinion; or insists most on some things, and delivers them in such forms of speech as most please them; or is full only of the glorious Privileges of the Saints (which, tho' fit to be treated of sometimes, must not ingross all our Discourses, or be more insisted on than those Duties which are to secure them to us,) and gives comfortable intimations that they are all theirs, which may feast their Fancies with the delightful Thoughts, of their being more precious and dear to God than others? Do they judge it to be edifying, I say, only from such things as these; or as it answers the foregoing Description of Edification? Do they hear Discourses of weightier Matters, or more plain and intelligible Accounts, less darkned with Phrases and Metaphors; or stronger Reasons for any Doctrines, or clearer Explications of any Duties, or more perspicuous and careful States of any Cases, or wiser Directions for any Points of Practice, or more forcible Motives to ingage to the use of them, or more satisfactory Solutions of
any

any important Questions and Doubts of Conscience in the Separate Meetings, than they might hear in the Parish-Churches? If they try the Point by these Measures, 'tis like they will not be so forward to pronounce against us, nor talk so much of the Edification of their own Preachers, and the want of it in ours.

2. *If, as they suppose, their Sermons were fitter than ours are for Edification, yet are not they sure to edify more by them.* For we are but the Means and Instruments, but the Effect of all proceeds from God's Blessing. *We are only Ministers*, says St. Paul, *by whom you believed. I have planted, and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase,* 1 Cor. 3. 5, 6. And we are most sure of God's Blessing, when we keep in God's own way, and wait upon him in those Means which he has allotted us. For God is wont to bless most his own Appointments; and that not only when they best answer the End of their Institution, and are most useful and edifying; but even when they are degenerated, and edify less; and accordingly our Saviour referr'd Men to them, when that was really the Case. The *Scribes and Pharisees* in his time, were
far

far from the most *edifying Teachers* ; being both *wicked* and *ignorant*, two most unedifying Qualities. They were *Blind Guides*, Matt. 23. 16. and *bad Liverd*, being full of *Vain Glory*, *Rapine*, and *Hypocrisy*, &c. v. 5, 6, 14. But yet unedifying as they were, since they *sat in Moses's Seat*, he refers the *Jews* to their *Ministry*, to expect the Blessing of God in their due attendance upon it, v. 2, 3. The *Priests* in those Days, by the *Scripture*-accounts of them, were far from the Holiest Men ; so that if the Holiness of him that brings it be any Recommendation of the Gift, they were not in themselves the fittest to present an Offering. But yet, because they were the Means of God's appointing, when the *Leper was cleansed*, and was to return God an *Oblation*, Christ orders him to carry it *to the Priest*, because through his Hands God would accept it of him, Matt. 8. 4. Thus is God's Blessing, which is the great Cause of our profiting, to be look'd for in God's own ways, and in attendance upon the Means which he has allotted us ; and we have not a like reason to expect it when we reject them, especially if we run into a plain Breach of that Unity and Good Order

he

he l
suit
goes
mor
edif
such
us.

3
yet
the
bett
ing
bet
tha
Sch
in

of
me
Pri
ana
in
Po
con
ons
Ch

pli

he has establish'd in his Church, in pursuit of others. And when God's Blessing goes along with them, we shall edify more by weaker Means; so that a more edifying Sermon in an unedifying Way, such as *Schism* is, is not so like to profit us. But,

3. If they could edify more by them, yet is it in no wise lawful thus to break the Unity and Peace of the Church for better Edification. There is no breaking Publick Peace, as we have seen, for better means of Private Profiting: so that no Man must ever seek to edify in *Schism*, or to grow in Grace by joyning in Separation.

And thus I have explain'd the *Nature of Edification*, and shewn what Improvements it implies; *viz. Any increase in Private Virtues, or in Publick Settlement and Peace.* So that then any Man edifies in Religion, when he is better'd in any Point of Faith or Manners, or made more complying with innocent Publick Constitutions, and a more peaceable Member of the Church.

And having thus shewn what it implies, I am now

R

2. To

2. To press it as the Great Point whereat they are to aim, on all sorts of Christians.

And here, had I time, I should urge all Christians to lay out themselves in improving useful Knowledge, and obedient Practice, and peaceable Inclinations; to stir up and cherish in themselves devout Affections, and daily renew and strengthen Holy Purposes, and express in the whole course of their Lives the Power of Godliness, in all due submission to their Governours, and tender care of the Churches Peace, as well as in all Duty towards God, and exercise of Private Virtues. For this is truly to grow in Grace, and be edified Believers.

I would intreat you, my Reverend Brethren, in the Name of Christ, whose Ministers we are, not only to be exemplary and shining Lights in edifying thus your selves; but also to be wise and unwearied in your Labours, in carrying on this Edification among all others you can any ways work upon, especially those committed to your Charge. That you would instruct the ignorant with all assiduity and plainness; convince the erroneous, with all gentle-

gentleness and calm arguings, yea with all Patience and Perseverance, remembering that it is an hard matter, and a work of Time, for a Man to cast off old and riveted Opinions, and that any one is troubled enough in being shew'd his Error, without hearing of it in Angry and Invective Speeches; and labour to win all Men over to an universal Holiness with your utmost Skill and Diligence. That you would study to be plain, and useful in all your Sermons: Prudently bold, and impartial in Reproofs; warning Men against all, even their beloved Vices, with such freedom, as may keep their Consciences awake, and yet with such shew of tenderness and prudent timing of Reproof, as may not tempt them to fly out from us: endeavouring to reclaim them from Schism, which is most mischievous to the Church, and which nothing can excuse before God but an honest Ignorance, and the pitiableness of unmasterable Prepossessions; and from all Prophaneness and Immoralities, which, without particular Repentance and Amendment, are most surely mischievous to their own Souls, which have no Plea of Pardonable Ignorance

and Involuntariness, and for which there is no Excuse at all. In all which, by the Love of Christ I would beseech you, to shew all Wisdom, and Diligence, and Patience, and unwearied Perseverance, and compassionate Tenderness and Love for Souls.

I would in all Christian Love beseech our *Dissenting Brethren*, and be instant with them, since it so nearly concerns both the Church and them, that they would seek no longer to build up only themselves; but to edify the Church of Christ, which they certainly pull down by their Separation.

In very deed they may have great Means of Private Edification in our Church, and need not seek for better in any other Place. They will edify sufficiently by our *Sermons*, as I have noted, if they bring along with them prepared Minds; and without them the *Jews* could not edify by the *Sermons of Christ* and his *Apostles*. And if they cannot edify by the *Churches Prayers* too, the Fault, I am sure, is not in the *Prayers*, but in *themselves*. For consider, Brethren, the Prayers we use are not to give Affections to us, but to express

press those we have ; so that when we come to Pray, we must bring them along with us. And if we come with an awful Sense of God in our Minds, with serious and good Purposes, and devout Affections, we need no better Helps to express them, than the Churches Service. For therein are found, suitable, and well-composed Prayers, which extend to all Necessities, begging all needful Graces, and praying particularly both against Sins and Calamities, and requesting outward Blessings, and giving Thanks for Receipt of Mercies, and interceding for all States and Conditions of Persons, and suited to the Great Periods and States of Life. In all which they pitch upon the most pertinent, and proper Things ; and express them in Grave, Plain, and Significant Language ; and are intermix'd with *Responses* to fix Attention, and call back wandring Thoughts ; and are parcell'd into Collects to give Breath, and not weary us out with an uninterrupted Continuance of intense Affections. So that if we bring with us a Heart to desire these things, here we have Prayers to suggest, and express our Desires of them ; yea, such, as

whilst they do expresse, are greatly fitted to increase them. Thus fit are they to edify in themselves, and this great Numbers of truly Pious and Devout Souls have found, and from their own Experience can testify concerning them. And now, if any shall still charge such excellent Prayers as unedifying; where lies the blame? whether in the Deadness of the Prayers, or the Indevotion and Unpreparedness of their own Hearts? If a Man thinks the most wholesom and substantial Food distasteful or insipid, 'tis a sign he has a depraved Appetite. And if he feels no Devotion in the use of such Pious, Wise, and Profitable Forms, 'tis a sign his Soul is sick, and that his Spiritual Sense has lost its Taste, since the most agreeable Food is no better relish'd by it. He is Indevout, not because the Prayers do not suggest Devout Things, nor cloath them in Proper and Devout Expressions; but because he doth not hold his Mind attent, or has not prepared his Heart to be affected with them. So that if these our Brethren will take the Godly Care and Pains to mend this Fault which is in themselves, and come with Reverent and Prepared Minds;

Minds; they will not, I believe, complain any longer of Deadness and want of Edification in the Churches Prayers, which are not only Good, but, as those who use them without prejudice, and with Devotion in their Hearts can testify, very excellent for that purpose.

But tho' they could not so well edify themselves in them; yet, by the Love of Christ I would beseech them, to seek no longer to build up only themselves; but to edify the Church of Christ, which they pull down by their Separation. Make Conscience of Peace and Unity, Brethren, and think them as Necessary things, as any others in Religion. Remember it is one of the necessary Properties of Charity to have such care of others as keeps out Schism; and that without this Charity there is no Benefit in any Services, no not in Martyrdom; and how then can you account to your selves the throwing that away, for any other thing? Esteem your selves as Members of the Body, and consider that the Body is built up by Unity. This Christ has founded upon himself, and the Apostles, those Master Builders,

R 4

have

have edified, by compacting it into one: and how then will you look either upon him or them, who pluck asunder what they put together, and pull it down by Division? The Design of God in all the most Powerful Gifted Ministers, is to build up the Body, and keep out Schism: and what account will you give to him for crossing that Design, in making these not only the Heads of Parties, but the Pretence of Separation? If you had lived in *Corinth*, when Men separated, as you do here, to follow more Gifted Guides, would not you have returned again to the Unity of the Church upon the Apostle's Admonition? And why then should you not do the same now, upon this Intimation, that his Reproof reaches you, as much as it did them? The Way of Separation, my Brethren, is a most unedifying Course; for Unity builds up, but Schism destroys the Church, and all Societies. So that if you would edify the Church, which is Christ's Spouse; if you will be at any pains to build it up, as he was at the pains to die for it; it must be in the way of Peace, and by submitting to
any

any thing, which you think may be done with a safe Conscience (as this Plea it self shews you do think in our Case, it being against our Way only because, as you say, less Edifying, not because of any Unlawfulness) rather than upon account thereof to divide, and form separate Parties.

I would exhort you the *Church-wardens* to be careful of Edifying, not only as Private Christians, but also in the faithful Discharge of your Oaths, (considering that Perjury has in it a most horrible Guilt) and in the Duties of your Places. That when you endeavour to suppress Vices, you would be impartial, and intire in such Endeavours; considering, that all Notorious Swearing, Drunkenness, and Immoralities, as well as staying away from Church; and that all staying away out of Irreligion and Carelessness, as well as out of Scruples and Pretence of Conscience, is equally a matter of your Oath, and a Point wherein you may do God, and the Souls of Men, Service. The *Church-wardens* swear, indeed, to discharge this only according to the best

best of their Knowledge ; but then they must use a competent Endeavour to know it, and this is no warranty at all to affect Ignorance ; and much less to pass over what they do know, in Negligence, or Connivance. And many, it may be of those that fail, would discharge it so far as they know, were it not that they are afraid to anger, and displease their Neighbours. But 'tis most unreasonable any Man should be angered with them for performing their Oaths, and discharging a Good Conscience. Can any Man, if he has left the Conscience, have left the Modesty withal so far, as to desire them to forswear themselves, and destroy their own Souls to do him a kindness ? Or will any Man that is Conscientious, and stays from Church out of Conscience, take it ill that they should be tender of their Consciences as well as he is of his, and dread the horrid Sin of Perjury, the greatest Wound to a Good Conscience ? They have no liberty of Connivance, being bound up by Oaths ; so that if any Favour and Indulgence be expected, it must not be from them, but at higher Hands. And therefore no Man,
in

in any Reason or Modesty, can be angry at them for acting faithfully according to their Oaths. But if any be; that Anger at Men for performing Oaths and a Good Conscience, is nothing less than frightening them from their Duty, and laying Stumbling-Blocks before others, and putting the Burden of the Cross on Good Mens Soulders for good Actions, which has so many Woes denounced to it in the Scriptures. And as for the *Churchwardens* themselves, when they incur any Displeasure or Malice of Men on this account, they may encourage themselves with this, That therein they suffer for Righteousness sake, and endure the Cross for keeping a Good Conscience, wherein they may comfortably commit themselves to God, expecting, that either his Providence will prevent any ill Effects, or infinitely make them up to them afterwards, because they have thus exposed themselves only to be faithful in his Service.

A
Funeral SERMON
FOR THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE,
THE
Lady FRANCES DIGBY,
Who Deceased
*At Coles-Hill in Warwickshire, on the
29th of September, 1684.*

Funeral of R. H. MON
FOR THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
Lady Frances Digby

Who Died
At Colchester in W. M. 1844
aged 84 years

TO THE
 RIGHT HONOURABLE,
 SIMON Lord DIGBY,
 Baron DIGBY of Geashill.

My Lord,

IN compliance with Your Lordship's Desire, I here present you with this faint Portraiture of your Dear, and Excellent Lady. Those rare Virtues, that endow'd her Noble Soul, had mightily endear'd her Person, and will always embalm her Memory, among those that knew her. But as they rendred her a Blessing to this, so they prepared her for the Converse of Angels, and Blessed Spirits in a better Place: And to
 compleat

compleat all his other Mercies, God has Crown'd all his Graces in her, which were ripe for Glory, by taking her to be Happy with himself. Had he lent us the Blessing for a longer Time, her Life would have been most truly instructing, and had the daily use and benefit of a Sermon. But since it has pleased him to take away the Original, 'tis pity the World should want the Copy too, and lose the Benefit of her Example. Your Lordship has already reaped much Profit, and is still in hope to receive more, by reflecting on it Your self: And You trust it may bring a like Advantage, and serve to kindle and cherish like Inclinations, in the Hearts of many others also. I am sure it is very fit for General use, and will do good to all who hear of it, if they are not wanting to themselves. For she was a very lively Draught of many excellent Virtues; and they must either be perfectly Good, (as none are in this World) or extreemly bad Souls, who cannot improve by being set in the Light of such Patterns.

One main Hindrance of this good Effect, my Lord, is the suspicion of Flattery and Insincerity in these Discourses, as if in them Men were not careful of strict Truth, and sought not so much what may be truly said, as what may set off their Subject. I cannot
promise

promise this Relation any Security from such Censures, since the truest, and most faithful Accounts in this kind, cannot always avoid them. But I have this Testimony in my self, That in the Description which I have given of this excellent Person, I have spoken nothing to deserve them. I have represented her as most exemplary, and imitable, in Modesty, and Sincerity; and I am sure I have had a great Concern upon me, not to lose either in Discoursing of her. I know there is not only Sincerity, but Care too required in every one, who will take upon him to be a Reporter: And this I have held my Eye upon, in all the Parts of her Character. I freely confess to Your Lordship, that my Aim has been to speak too little, for fear of saying too much; and that I have designedly used Wariness in several Expressions, lest venturing to the utmost Bounds of Truth; I might happen to step beyond them. And whatever Judgment they may pass, who knew little of her, I have this to satisfy my self, and the World too, that they who knew her best, and especially Your Lordship, will say this is not only a True, but a Modest Character.

I heartily wish, my Lord, that this Draught of Your Dear Lady, were sitter than it is, to serve Your Lordship's Ends, of rendring her

The Epistle, &c.

Example useful to the World, and doing Honour to her Memory. I hope, thro' the Grace of God, and Your Piety and discreet Care, that the Representation of her Virtues will not renew Your Grief, which shews her to be set above it. For it would trouble me to think that I have sent a Companion into Your Retirements, to minister to Sadness and dejected Thoughts, and render this Service, which is perform'd with Willingness, uneasy in the Remembrance of it, to,

My Good Lord,

Your Lordship's most Affectionate,

From Your Lord-
ship's House near
Colts hill, Oct. 23.
1684.

Humble Servant,

John Kettlewell.

PROV.

PROV. XIV. 32.

8 (c) ~ w / z . o - (c)
 ----- But the Righteous hath Hope in
 his Death.

THese Words describe the different State of *Good* and *Bad* Men, and shew how happy the one, and how wretched the other are, when some great Affliction, especially when Death seizes them. In the Time of Health and Prosperity, the Wicked often seem the happiest Persons; they enjoy so much of the Bounty of Providence, as if God were pleased with them; which puffs them up with a conceit of their own Happiness, and makes others envy them. But when any great Distress, especially when Death comes, that always makes the Discrimination. Transgressors then are in a most deplorable State, and most destitute of Comforts when they most need them. But the Righteous have a good Support, and

S 2

begin

begin those Joys, which will never end, or be diminish'd. The faster they are flying from the World, the nearer they approach to Almighty God: When their Condition seems at the worst, 'tis really almost at the best; for then they are upheld by a chearful Hope, and are presently to be inflated in the joyful Possession of an everlasting Kingdom. *The Wicked is driven away in his Wickedness: i.e.* When great Distress, especially when Death comes, he can promise nothing to himself, but is driven from all his Hopes by the Consciousness of his own Wickedness, which bids him still expect more, and greater Miseries: *But the Righteous* knows he shall be a Gainer by it, and *has hope in his Death.*

This difference is not always true in Point of *Fact*, as if Good Men always left the World with a quiet Mind, and comfortable Hope, and Ill Men in Horror and Astonishment. Thus indeed it often is. For the Righteous ordinarily die in Peace, and that is enough to verify the Text, which is a *Proverbial* Speech: For *Proverbs* do not express a Rule which never alters, but that doth not alter ordinarily, in the usual Observation and Course of Things. And the Wicked

Wicked oftentimes are full of Fears, especially when they have been guilty of *Gross* and *Crying* Sins, which are more apt to strike Terror upon the Conscience. But tho' in the Case of Good Men this do *generally* fall out, and in the Case of Bad Men very *frequently*, yet in neither of them is it *constant*. For some Righteous Souls are mis-led in judging of themselves by Scrupulous Principles; or are full of Melancholy, which is a timorous Passion, and betrays them to unreasonable Fears: And they, it may be, die with troubled, and terrified Consciences. And many of the Wicked are possess'd with a presumptuous belief of God's Goodness; or are full of Pride and Self-Flattery, and, by mincing and hiding their own Faults, and unreasonably magnifying every little Performance and Attainment of their own, think too well of themselves: And they die swoln big with Hopes, and vain Confidences. So that in *Fact*, tho' it be ordinarily, yet sometimes it is not true, that Good Men have Hope in their Death, and Ill Men want it.

But tho' it be not always true in Point of *Fact*, yet it always is in the *Ground* and *Reason* of it. A wicked Liver has

always Cause to be dismay'd, tho' he will not believe it till he feels it. And a Righteous Man has always Cause of Hope in Death, if he has but the Understanding to discern it. And whether he see it or no, he shall be sure to find the Benefits thereof, and be a Gainer by it. And in this Sense the Words admit of no exception, that when the Wicked wants, *the Righteous has hope in his Death*, i. e. he has most just Reason so to do.

In Discourfing upon these Words, I shall shew,

1. *Who the Righteous Man is, to whom this Privilege belongs.*

2. *What are his Hopes, that make Death a desirable thing to him, which to others is the King of Terrors.*

3. *Apply this, to allay our Grief and Sorrow on the Death of Friends.*

1. I shall shew *who the Righteous Man is, to whom this Privilege belongs.* And that is every Man, who has led a good Life, and has not allow'd himself in any known Sins, but has had a regard to all God's Commandments.

He

He is one who *has led a Godly Life*. This is the true Test to descry who are Righteous, which we are to judge of, not from some Religious Heats, or transient Convictions, or good Wishes; but from the Tenor of a Pious Practice. *He that doth good, saith St. John, is of God, 3 Joh. 11. And again, Let no Man deceive you in this Point; for he that doth Righteousness is Righteous, even as he is Righteous, 1 Joh. 3. 7.* And it is the only sure Ground of Hope for dying Persons. He must have lived Holily, who would die happily, for it is nothing else but an Holy Life that can make happy. That is the only sure Preparation for Death, since it is the main thing to be inquired of after Death; for then Men shall all be judged according to their Works, Rev. 20. 13.

In one Case, 'tis true, good Purposes will make happy, tho' a Man has *never practised* them. And that is in the Case of such *dying Penitents*, as God sees have both *Sincerity* and *Strength* enough of Godly purpose, and by means thereof would certainly Practise well if they had but Time. But as for these, they are so very few, that they seem not to be of any great Account in the Description

of the Righteous. Conversion, in the ordinary Course, goes on by steps? God's Grace is infused, and our wicked Lusts are mortified by degrees; and without an unwonted, and extraordinary Grace, (which no Man must expect, and least of all they who have slighted all God's gracious Offers to the very last,) it is not to be begun and finished in the last Moments. The Righteous ordinarily, are only such, as have done Righteousness in their Lives; and among all the numerous Attempters, 'tis hard to find those, who can succeed and become Righteous, by forming good Resolutions upon their Death-beds. And as for those who do then become such, it is more than they can know themselves. For no Man, who is only beginning to resolve well, can know the strength and efficacy of his own Resolutions, till he comes to try and practise them: And till he knows that, tho' he may have the *Safety*, yet he cannot have the *Comfort* and the *Hopes* of a Righteous Man. Bare Purposes, rarely give Safety, but never Comfort to a dying Person; so that the Hopes of the Righteous must not rest on them alone, but have something else, *viz.* a *well led Life*, to bottom on.

And

And this Life must have been *uniform in all Duties*, when a Man has not allow'd himself in any known Sins, but has had a *Regard to all God's Commandments*.

Some parcel out the Law of God, and think to pass for Righteous Persons, for performing some particular Things. This some of the *Jewish Doctors* made very easy, declaring that a Man might be Righteous by observing *any one Commandment* which he pleased. For these are some of their Rules. * *Qui*

dat operam Præcepto, liber est à Præcepto. He that exercises himself in any one Precept, for that time is freed from minding any other. And again, *Whosoever shall*

perform any one of the 613 Precepts of the Law (for so many they are according to their reckoning) *without any worldly respect, for Love of the Precept, shall inherit thereby Everlasting Life.* But when they would be more secure, and act more commendably, they would not content themselves with any of the Precepts indifferently, but make a choice, according to the estimation which they thought God himself had of them. For they fancied, that he did not rate all his Laws equally, but esteem'd some more than others:

* See Mr. Smith's learned Discourse of a legal Righteousness among his Sel. Discours. c. 3. p. 290, &c.

others: As the *Lawyer* plainly shew'd, when he desir'd to be satisfied *which was the great Commandment of the Law*, Matt. 22. 36. and the *young Man*, when he ask'd *what good thing he should do to have Eternal Life*, i. e. of all the good Things where-to Life is promised, whether was the Sabbath, or Sacrifices, or which other Precept best; what was that good thing which would most secure it, *Matt. 19. 16.* And fancying there were some such darling Precepts, they thought he was most sure to be acceptably Righteous, who had the good luck to hit upon that Commandment, which God most accounted of. And the like Opinions, tho', God be thanked, not authorized by the common Sayings of our Doctors, are most unhappily got into the Hopes, and Practice of too many among our selves; nay, alas! of the generality of Christians. For they too often think to pass for Righteous Men, only on the score of some *particular* Observances, as being Constant in Prayers, or Liberal in Alms, or Zealous in God's Cause, especially if that be in some notable Instance, and perform'd with great Hazards; without having an Eye all this while to their whole Duty, and whilst at the same time

time they allow themselves in some known Sins. But whilst after this rate they mangle the Law of God, and parcel out their Duty, their Thoughts or Righteousness are but a Dream, and all their Hopes are a vain Presumption. No Duties will save us when they are singled out from the rest, and stand alone; but only when they are all in Conjunction. St. Paul instances in *two*, viz. *Giving all he has to feed the Poor*, and *giving his Body to be burnt in Martyrdom*, which will easily be allow'd to have preference before all others. But yet, says he, if these go by themselves, and *have not Charity*, which, as he describes it, *v. 4, 5, &c.* besides Alms, contains in it many other Instances, *it profits me nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. 3.

The Righteous Man then, is one who has an eye to all God's Laws; and whensoever he transgresses any, doth not allow himself in that breach, but rises again by true Repentance. This is Righteousness in any Person. And without this, the Hopes in Death, which the Text mentions, will avail nothing. For many Men are full of Hope, who have no just Cause for it; and, on the contrary, others are afraid to Dye, who
may

may justly meet Death with comfort. The Melancholy of some, and the Sanguine Complexion of others, fill them with Hopes and Fears, which are not owing to the Reason of Things, but only to their natural Tempers: So that to shew any Man a dying Saint, who has Cause to rejoice in his Death, it is not enough that he have Peace of Mind, but also that he have just Ground for it too.

And thus having shewn who this Righteous Man is, to whom this Privilege belongs: I proceed now,

2. To shew *what are his Hopes, that make Death a desirable thing to him, which to others is the King of Terrors.*

Now this Hope is of the Favour and Friendship of Almighty God, and of all those Blessings which may be expected from it. What those Blessings are, was not so well known in Old Times, when God led Men on by more dark, and indefinite Expectations of the Future Happiness. But when Christ came, he

* 2 Tim. 1. 10. *brought Life and Immortality to Light;* and has told us plainly, that at their Deaths, all Righteous Men shall be transla-

translated to the unspeakable and eternal Joys of Heaven. And these are so great, that no Heart can wish for more. For the Blessings of that Place are so large, as to fill all our Capacities; so pure, as not to have the least mixture of Sorrows; so constant, as to admit of no abatements, or intermissions. We shall always desire, and always be satisfy'd; and when we have enjoy'd the most, we shall never be cloy'd, nor wearied with it. We shall live in God's Presence, and share in his Likeness, and shine in his Glory, and have Fellowship with the Saviour of the World, and all the spotless Angels, and with all the Glorified Saints and God-like Persons, whose Society alone is enough to turn any Place into a Paradise. And all these we shall enjoy, without all fear of Misfortune, either theirs, or our own; without all danger of displeasing them, or fear of losing them; without seeing any thing, either to pity, or blame in them; or any damps of Friendship, and intermission of Affection. In sum, we shall never see any ill, nor suffer it; nor ever want any good thing, or, when we have it, fear to be depriv'd of it: But we shall be infinitely happy, and ever think
our

our selves so, and continue in that State for evermore.

This is the Eternal Life, which God promises, and whereto Death now conveys all Righteous Persons. And since it is the way to our injoyment of all this Bliss, it is no longer a Spoiler of our Joys, but a Step to them, and a thing to be desired by all Godly Souls. It is, indeed, like churlish Physick, very ungrateful in it self, tho' it may be most desireable in the effect. It brings a Dissolution of Nature, which strikes Horror, and that into the best Men, who would desire not to Dye, if they could come at the Happiness of the other Life without dying. And this *St. Paul* testifies of himself, confessing, that as for the way of receiving the *Heavenly house*, *i. e.* the glorified Body, he had rather be *found alive*, and have it superinduced by a translation; than be stripp'd of this Body first by Death, and afterwards be *cloath'd* again. My wish, says he, is *not to be uncloath'd*, *i. e.* to put off this Body first, *but to be cloathed upon* by having the other superinduced, *that mortality may not so truly be put off, as swallowed up of Life*, 2 Cor. 5. 1, 4. But it is most incomparably

parably advantageous in the Event. Tho' the way be hard and rugged, yet 'tis short, and the Prize at the end is wonderfully Rich and Pleasant: So that every considerate Man, who looks beyond Death, hath the greatest Reason to desire it. To them, as St. Paul says, it has quite lost its * *Sting*, and is become * *1 Cor. 15* the truest *Gain*, *Phil. 1. 21*. All sense⁵⁵ of what it takes away, is drown'd in the boundless apprehension of what it gives, and *Death is swallowed up in Victory*, *1 Cor. 15. 54*. It confers on them, all that their Hearts can desire; and therefore, if they rightly consider it, ought not to be a matter of their Fear: It takes them from a Dunghill to a Throne, and invests them in all the Glory and Riches of an everlasting Kingdom.

I come now

3. To *apply this, to allay our Grief and Sorrow on the Death of Friends.*

I do not seek to suppress all Grief for a dying Friend; for that is an impossible Task. Friendship is a close thing, and lies near to our Hearts; so near indeed, that a Friend is said, and that very justly, to be a *Second self*. And there-

therefore to be insensible when a dear Friend is torn from us, is as impossible, as to have no sense when a Finger is rent off from our Hand, or our Heart is pluck'd out of our Bodies. Some Course Nature will have in spite of all Arguments, and no Man can restrain it. Yea, and what is more, it is not fit he should do it, if he could. For some sorrowful Concern is necessary to shew that we are sensible of our Loss, and to evidence our Affection for the Person who is gone: As the *Jews*, when *Jesus wept* for *Lazarus*, cry'd out, *Behold how he loved him*, *Joh. 11. 35, 36.* The Unconcernedness of the Living, seems a Reflection upon the Dead, and argues that they were not beloved while they lived, but that the World was weary of their Company, and even their pretended Friends very willing, if not glad, to be quit of them. And therefore it is reckon'd as a Part of *God's Judgment* upon the *Jews*, that when they died, *there should be no wailing for them*, *Ezek. 7. 11.* But with this Grief for our own Loss, in the departure of our Friends, we must at the same time shew our selves sensible who it is that has taken them, and that too for their own Gain; and that he still continues to
us

us a thousand Blessings, when he only calls back one. And therefore with Sorrow for them, we must be sure to join Submission to God; to resign up our Wills to his, and be not only outwardly silent, but inwardly reconcil'd to what he has done; and to be heartily thankful, both for all the Kindnesses which he shew'd to our departed Friends, and for that vast Number of others which he still continues to our selves. These things will not be perform'd as they ought, when Grief grows strong. Whilst it keeps within due bounds, such as suit with the Apprehensions and Hopes of Christians, it is what Natural Affection will force from us, and what Religion allows of: But when it becomes ungovernable, and boisterous in Degrees; or obstinate in Continuance, it is in it self an ill Thing, and an irresistible Temptation: So that when we do grieve, we must be careful to keep back from all excess, and to do it with moderation: And to temper our Grief; which needs a most watchful care to govern and allay it upon these occasions; among those many things which might be suggested, I shall only observe these two; *viz.* That, *when our Friends are truly Religious,* T i: We

1. We have not the least pretence to *be immoderate out of our Love to them*, because it is *incomparably their Gain*. They are translated to a Place of Bliss, where they are infinitely joyful in their own Minds, and from whence they would not be removed by any Offers: So that we have no colour of Reason to be sad, but the highest Cause to congratulate upon their Accounts; as the *Primitive Christians* of old, and we still do, for the Death of *Saints* and *Martyrs*, the Memorials of whose Death we celebrate with *Festivals*, as the Day of their Birth to an immortal Life. If we have a true and wise Love for our Friends, we shall not only be willing, but glad above all that God should Love them too. And then we must needs be thankful when he shews his Love, and takes them to those Joys, which are the end of all their Hope, and beyond which they can never wish for any more.

2. Nor have we any Reason to *be immoderate in bemoaning our own Loss*, because we shall go to the same Place, and meet again in time. Our own Loss, indeed, is the only thing which can trouble us; and when we do Grieve and Mourn, it is only in Love to our selves. But this is
no

no Cause at all to be intemperate, or obstinate in Grief; for it will all be made up again, if we will have a little Patience. They are gone to that Place, whither we all hope to come; so that if we can stay a while, we shall enjoy our Friends again. Their Departure from the World, is but like Mens taking of a Journey; not an utter Loss of Friends, but only an absence from them for a small space. And when once that is past, the next meeting shall be in so great, and lasting Joy, as shall infinitely make amends for it. For then our Friends shall be stript of all Humane Frailties, and made absolute in all desirable Perfections, which will make them more deserving of our Love, and dearer to us; and that Love shall never cause Grief and Torment, as it doth now, by a second absence. As we shall be most happy in them, so shall we ever be secure of them; for then there will not be the least Fear, because not the least danger or possibility of parting any more.

And thus I have done with the Explication of the Text, and shewn both who the Righteous are, and what great

and comfortable things, when Death comes, they have to hope for.

But hitherto I have only *laid down the Rule*, and I have still another Work to do, which is, to *set it off*, yet further, in a *fair Pattern and Example of it*: I mean the *Excellent Noble Person now Deceased*, the Character of whose Virtues will give Life to all that I have said, and be the best, and most useful thing in all my Sermon. She was a great Instance of many Virtues, nay, of some, which are almost lost in Practice, which seem to reign scarce any where but upon Mens Tongues, as if they were impracticable Rules, that were never intended to be follow'd and perform'd, but only to be prais'd and talk'd of. And I cannot do more right to those neglected Graces, than to shew the remiss and slothful World that they are more than Words, and are real live things, made visible to all in the Excellency of her Practice.

God had endow'd her with an *excellent Nature*, which prevented many of the great Self-denials in Religion, and made it to her a tolerably easy thing. This is an invaluable Blessing which God bestows on some special Favourites, and it was eminent in her. To be universally

fally kind and pleasing, was one of the most Natural things in her Complexion, which made a Religion of Love to be imbrac'd without opposition. And together with this kindness of Nature, he had bless'd her with much humbleness of Mind, and with a just seriousness and composure of Spirit, which made her apt for Devotion and wise Counsels, and easy to receive, and retain any good Impressions, which should be stamp'd upon her.

Together with this Goodness of Nature, as another Testimony of his singular Grace and Favour, he had provided for her an *excellently Virtuous, Wife, and careful Mother*; who begun early to cultivate this rich Soil, and plant the Seeds of Virtue in it, e're the Vices of the World could make their Attempts upon her. She taught her Goodness by plain Rules, and shew'd it to the Life in an admirable and a brave Example. And her Pattern this prepared Soul knew so well how to prize, that she had chosen it for her own imitation; resolving to govern her self by her Mother's Rules, and to fix her Eye upon her Noble Virtues, and, as near as she could, to transcribe them in her own Practice. And

this shews a generous liking of Goodness, and promises a great Progress in it, when any Persons aim, so far as they are able, to equal the most accomplish'd Saints, and to live up to the Rules of the best Examples.

And to compleat all, when she was depriv'd of this Blessing, his watchful Care provided a *Husband* for her, who to the intimacy of his Relation to her as a *Wife*, the top of worldly Friendships, coveted to add a Nobler Friendship still, that bottom'd upon likeness of Souls and virtuous Grounds, and was design'd to serve the most excellent Purposes of Religion, in making each other Better and Wiser, which is the Perfection of the Wisest, and most exalted Friendships, betwixt the most endear'd Persons.

Thus liberally had God endow'd this select Soul with Inclinations to Virtue and Goodness, and with Opportunities to ripen and improve them. And had he spar'd her a longer Life, wherein to imploy the Talents he had given, we may justly expect the Increase would have been in a greater Measure and Proportion. But tho' her Race was quickly done (for she dy'd in the *twenty third* Year

Year of her Age) yet she had run much in a little time: in her green Years she had attain'd a Maturity in Goodness, and was grown ripe in the true Ends and Art of Living; and the effect of these Advantages was visible in an exemplary, and truly Christian Conversation. To recount all her Virtues, is more than I can pretend to do; they were known only to God, who will reveal them at last to all the World; but for the Imitation of those whom she has left behind her, I shall observe these following.

Her *Piety* was great towards *Almighty God*. She knew what Honour and Homage we all owe to him, and was careful to lay out her self upon it. She would converse with him duly in her Closet-retirements; and constantly make one to do him Service in the Publick Assemblies, not allowing her self to neglect the Service of God for little Reasons and Inconveniencies, which can keep none back, but those who have too little Zeal for God, and too much slothfulness or delicacy of Spirit. And, which shew'd how sincerely she resorted thither, not at all to set off her self, but purely for Pious Ends, at Church she did affect plain.

2 Pet. 3.
34.

plainness of Dress, and would not seek there to recommend her self to others, no not in the most publick Places, by elaborate Attire and *outward Adorning*; but only to God by the Devotion of her Mind, and the Ornament of an *humble* and a *meek Spirit*, (things wherein she was hardly to be equall'd,) *which in the sight of God*, as St.* Peter says, *are of great Price*. She was in a constant Preparation, as all good Souls are, for the Holy Sacrament, and careful to embrace all Opportunities of joyning in it: For since I had the Happiness to observe her, she never miss'd a Communion, but was always one in that highest Instance of Devotion, to offer up the Sacrifice of a Devout Heart, and thankfully to acknowledge the Stupendious Love of God, and of our Dearest Saviour to Mankind. Such was the *Devotion* of this Fair Saint towards Almighty God, which did not come upon her by Fits, but was a settled Habit, that dwelt upon her Spirit. And in all this she shew'd an inward, and hearty Piety, as one who plainly sought to be Good between her self, and him that sees in secret. For her Religion did not seek to shew it self in an affected Out-side, in studied Appearances,

pearances, in Talk and Noise; but in all the Modesty, Silence, and Gravity, of an hearty and unaffected Godliness. She was Good after the best Fashion, in an inward Religion: Which, tho' it shew'd it self in such Reverent and Composed Meen, as naturally flow'd from, and testified a Spirit greatly affected; yet did not appear in any thing, which could seem chosen for Show or Ostentation.

And as she was thus careful to address to God, so, which is a more real Instance of a governing Piety, could she *quietly resign* her self to his Will in the hardest Providences, and *trust* him with any thing. The best Remedy in Afflictions, as she said, was *Prayer to God*: And when she was tried with them, she found the Effect of it, in an humble, calm, and uncontestig Resignation. And to shew the firm and settled Confidence which she had fix'd in his Care; when she was surpriz'd with Death, she look'd on the *sweet Babe* which she was to leave behind her, as so secure in the Custody of Almighty God, and under him in the Care of her Dear Husband, that the Thoughts of it did not in the least trouble her.

As

As to the *Government of her self*, and those Virtues which were chiefly due to her own Person; she was endow'd with an *even Temper*, and the *Command of her own Inclinations*, and *Contempt of the World*, with *Humility*, *Sincerity*, and other Virtues, and was a very great Example in them.

She was singularly Happy in an *even Temper*, not violently transported, but only duly affected whatever happened. No prosperous Accidents could over-joy, nor cross Events unmeasurably disturb her. Yea, even in her Bodily Pains she would keep her Evenness, and shew nothing of a disturb'd Spirit, wherein Religion, and the constant Goodness of her Inclination had lost the Reins; but was wont even then to be pleas'd with all that was done about her, and to be careful in what she did or said her self to please all.

She had a *strange Government of her own Desires and Inclinations*, and could command and restrain them almost in any thing. This is a notable Instance of Religion, the greatest part and hardship whereof lies in *denying of our selves*, as Sin doth in *Self-pleasing*. And this the Wisest, and Best Men have still thought,
as

as the most Difficult, so the Bravest, and most Noble Undertaking. It is not so illustrious a Point of Mastery, and part of Valour in any Man to conquer another, as to conquer his own Passion; and he shews a greater height of Resolution and Bravery who overcomes himself, than he who subdues a City. And she was a Noble Instance of this Mastery. Indeed, I think, she could deny her self what she pleas'd, and cross any Inclination for a good End, and not be troubled at it. She was devested of her self, and was anothers Good, which is the Character of a Good Person; ready to do any thing for another's, and to forego any thing which made for her own satisfaction.

She had a *Generous contempt of the World*; and tho' she had ever been in the midst of all that could make her value, and be in Love with it, and was in the Spring of her Years, which is an Age most subject to admire it; yet she kept it still without her, and liv'd above it. She sprung from an Illustrious, Noble Stock; but she was not forward to make known the Honour of her Blood, nor seem'd to prize her self upon it. She shew'd the true Spirit of Nobility; which

which is, that when as all other persons, to keep up Degrees and good Order in the World, do respect and honour Titles, yet they who wear them do overlook and despise them, and value themselves only upon what is their own, not what is deriv'd from Ancestors. And as for all the Splendor, and Gratifications of the World; she seem'd generally so indifferent in the pursuit, and so unaffected in the use of them, as plainly shew'd she sat loose from them. Had she lived always in the Eye of worldly Vanities, I think in some measure they would have taken off the Mind, either of her, or of any other, from God and better things. But besides this, as for any other Effects, I doubt 'tis hard to find a Person, that might be safer trusted with them. For as for their being otherwise a Snare, she was so indifferent, they could not much have tempted her. And having this contempt of the World, she could easily part with any of the Riches of it for Good and Wise Ends, but not for any others: For she was so much above Shew, and so inclin'd to solid Goodness, that her Generosity would not spend it self upon Vanity or Extravagance: But on any Charitable,

Charitable, or Good Occasion, she had a Generous Soul, and would both readily, and Liberally contribute. That, indeed, was her Heart's delight; and if she valued Money, whereof she shew'd a great Neglect, upon any account, it was for the opportunity and satisfaction of doing Good with it.

Humility was her beloved Grace, which she sought of God with earnestness, and which she had attain'd to Admiration. She had a strange Modesty in her Nature, which made her conceit meanly of her self, and render'd her very backward to believe, that any thing in her could deserve Praise, and almost afraid to receive it. She saw too much of emptiness in all those things which puffs us up, to be proud of any of them. She might have been exalted in her own Mind, by reflecting upon her High Birth, and her great Advantages of Estate and Honour. But she had a just estimate of all, and did not think her self the better or more deserving because she had them; nor others the worse because they wanted them. Nay, her great Virtues, which were Solid Goods, did not exalt her in her own Opinion. I think she strove to conceal them from
her

her self: And as for any Ostentation of them abroad, she was so (I had almost said) over-modest, and extreemly nice in that, that one shall not ordinarily see more care in others to shew forth their Goodness, than was in her to hide it.

Sincerity and an *undissembling Heart*, were not only the Religion of her Choice, but the Virtue of her Nature. No Person need be more reserv'd in any thing, that should be kept a Secret; and none more true, and plain-hearted in what she spoke. She knew not how to act double in any thing, and, indeed, she needed not, having no Thoughts or Ends to conceal and be asham'd of. For she was obliging, without all Designs, and used to harbour no Thoughts of any, but what were good; and pursue no Aims, but what were Honourable and Just: So that whensoever she spoke, she might say the Truth, and had no great Temptation to disguise it.

These are some of those Excellencies, which did adorn her self, and were due unto her own Person.

And then as for her *Carriage towards all the World besides*, how truly Christian a Part did she act in that, in a constant
kindness,

kindness, candor, and intire easiness of Conversation. In all which, her Life was full of deserv'd Praise to her self, and very useful and instructive unto others, fit to direct the Lives, and to excite the Imitation of all those, who had the opportunity to behold it.

She was truly kind, and full of *Charity* and *Good Nature* to all who conversed with her. Her singular Modesty was a great Restraint to her in taking Acquaintance; and this, perhaps may be misconstrued by some, who have not either the Skill, or Care to discern betwixt distrust of one's self, and neglect of others. But in reality she had both an humble, and a kind Heart, prepared to oblige and please all with whom she had to do. She thought no Person was too mean for her to know, and every one she knew, or indeed saw, she was Naturally Courteous and Respective to. Affable, and easy of Access she was to all; and particularly to those, who had any thing to ask of her. And when she was to dispense a Charity, she had, as a Liberal, so a tender Hand, careful not only to supply the Necessity, but, what is a doubling of any Gift, to save the Modesty of the Receiver. For her Favours

vours came so easily and freely from her, and she appear'd to be so pleas'd with them her self, as would not only incourage, but invite a Beggar. She lov'd to see all Persons pleas'd, and so sparing was she of any thing that might trouble them, that tho' she would be compassionate, and bear a part in their Sorrows, yet her own should be to her self; and if she could help it, they should seldom bear any in hers. Her Desire was to be easy and obliging unto all, and her Study, but, indeed, she needed not to study it, was to offend none. And this Goodness was a settled Temper, so firmly rooted in her, that neither outward Occurrences, nor bodily Indispositions, (which are apt to prevail on others, and must needs tempt her,) made her fretful, and uneasy to those about her; and I think it may be as truly said of her, as it can well be of any, that she was always in good Humour:

She was a Person of *extraordinary Candor*, in construing all that others did, or said. Here, indeed, she excell'd, and, I doubt, is rarely to be parallell'd. She had the Wit to make Interpretations of all sorts, but her Goodness still determin'd them on the kind side. So that
the

the Good needed not to fear her Censure, and, if they must fall under any, the Faulty had much Reason to desire it. Nay, so Christianly nice was her Charity in this point, that as she would not make Reflections on others Weaknesses, or say a severe thing her self; so, as has been several times observ'd, she could give no Approbation to it, when others did it. If she did not become their Advocate, in suggesting something in their excuse; she used to rebuke their Accusers by her Silence, or her Countenance. For so truly did she make her Neighbours Concern her own, that she could not ordinarily lend so much as a Smile, to any Ridiculous, or smart thing, which was said against them.

Thus candid was she in judging, or speaking of what was done, or said by others; and this she was, where one is tempted to be most suspicious, *viz. in things which related to her self.* For even in them, she could suspect no hurt, because she meant none. She had such a Native Simplicity, and Generous Goodness in her own Breast, that she could not without great Proof, and hardly then too, suspect otherwise of any other Person. Scarce any where shall one find

a Nature more slow to take things ill, and resent Unkindnesses ; or that has so great a Memory as hers in other things, and yet is so very apt, as she was, to forget them.

She was a very *easy Person in all Converse*, not given, as I noted, to trouble any with her own Praise, or the Dispraise of others, and evidencing an Esteem of every Person but her self. She was too Generous, and Good-natur'd, to scorn any for their Meanness ; or to deride them for their Folly, and Impertinence. Wheresoever she went, her custom was to take all things kindly, finding no faults, and much less speaking of them. She was a very desirable Person to be concern'd withal, either in conferring, or receiving kindnesses : For when others did any thing for her, she thought it was too much ; but what she could do for them, she overlook'd as if she had done nothing. She expected so little to her self, that she was never apt to take exceptions ; and was so humble, innocent, and obliging, that she was in little danger of doing any thing for others to except against. Scarce any thing could anger her, that was done to her, and much less would any thing anger others,

others, that passed from her. So that every one was sure to be at ease, and have nothing that could reasonably provoke them, whilst they kept her Company.

She *spoke not much*, but was of few words; a great Art of keeping Innocence, (especially in an Age which abounds in Censure) under all the Temptations to Discourse, and of having little to Repent of. This, perhaps, some may think, whatever it be of their Virtue and Innocence, is no Commendation of the Wit and Parts of any Person. But every Wise Man knows, that Understanding consists in Wise and Pertinent, and not in much talking. God had given her a solid Reason, and when she did speak, it was truly Pertinent, and worth the hearing. And during all the time I have had the Happiness to observe her, I do not remember what frivolous, or fond thing I have heard come from her. She could not allow her self to say ill of any, nor could lend a Word, or spare, as I said, so much as a Smile in Approbation when others did; and therefore whensoever the Faults and Blemishes of Persons was the Topick of Discourse, it was little she had to speak.

But tho' her Discourse was the less upon that account, yet I am sure the Example is good, and it was the more innocent and profitable, which makes an abundant amends for it.

In a word, She was a truly *excellent*, and *amiable Person*; plentifully indow'd with those Qualities that may gain Love, and with those Virtues which deserve Imitation. And she had this Testimony of her Worth, which shews not only the Reality, but the Greatness of it; she was not, as too many others are, liked best at first, but still grew higher in Esteem, as she was longer and better known. For she had such a Stock of true and solid Goodness, as could not be discover'd (especially through the Veil which her Modesty cast before it) till Time drew it out, and still administred matter to those who beheld her, for a new and growing Affection. She envied no Person's Condition, but was hugely pleas'd and contented in her own. She was a sincere Christian, an Ornament to her Husband, (by whom she was dearly Beloved, and her Memory is highly Honour'd, as she most justly deserv'd it should be), and an extraordinary Blessing to this Family, who
do

do resignedly submit to it as to what God has order'd, but think the Loss of such a Treasure so great, that in this World they dare not hope to meet with any thing which can repair it.

And what is still the Crown and Glory of all these Perfections, amidst all this, she was, as I hinted, so *free from Ostentation*, and so *opposite to any thing* that look'd like *seeking Praise*, as nothing in this World ordinarily can be more. She was a Person, as of a very great, so, what makes it greater still, of a very conceal'd Goodness. She us'd Arts to hide her Virtues, and would hardly be brought to acknowledge any thing to her just Praise, and did as truly take pains to avoid the Opinion of being Excellent in any Endowments, as others do to obtain it. So that she was like the Sun wrap'd up in a Cloud, her Rays were cast all inward, and, so far as she could order it, shone only to her self, and to Almighty God. She would, it seems, as far as she was able, be good altogether for his Sake, and seek no worldly Advantage by it: But at the same time she aspir'd to be great in Goodness, she shunn'd the Reputation of being thought so.

Such were the Virtues, and so considerable were the Attainments of this Pious Soul in Righteousness. And being so well stored in Goodness, it may well be expected that she should have her share in Comforts, and, as the Text says, have *Hope in her Death*. And so, indeed, it was. Her Death was very sudden, suspected by none, nor in all appearance by her self, till she awaked in the Jaws of it, and said *she was a Dying*. This was very short warning. But tho' it may be sudden, it is never too soon to a Good Christian. A well-spent Life is such a Preparation, that altho' it comes the most unexpected, it can never take them unprovided, but they may meet it upon any intimation. But this suddenness, tho' it could not endanger the Safety, yet was it a mighty Tryal of the clear Conscience, and firm Hopes of this excellent Person. If any thing had stuck upon her, or she had been conscious of any thing to affright her; then, no doubt, had been the Time to fear, when the Judge had sent the Summons, and call'd her in to come before him. But, whether from the Applause of a clear Conscience, which, having been hitherto a Faithful Guide, proved

proved now a Comfort to her; or whether from the intimation of some good Angel, who was come to carry off his Charge (if Angels do then begin a Correspondence, and give kind intimations when a Soul is just leaving the Body, and going to Converse and be Fellow-Citizen with themselves): From which soever of these Causes, I say, it hapned, thus it was, this Happy Soul, in that Surprise, had a clear, chearful Confidence, and a foretaste of that Joy and Peace, which God was preparing for her: Tho' she knew she was going in haste, she could take time, and spend some of those few minutes she had still remaining, to declare her mind in some Things which she would have ordered. And observing her Nurse that was attending her, to fall a weeping, with an even and undisturb'd Mind she rebuk'd her, and bid her not to weep for her, for she was going to be Happy, and to be an Angel in Heaven.

And thus I have endeavour'd to give some Account of this Excellent Person, and to lay out some of those Virtues in her, which may bring Honour to God, and the greatest Benefit to our selves,

by our Godly Imitation of them. This, tho' to some who knew her not, or who look'd not near or long enough upon her to discover a Goodness so silent and secret, it may seem an ample; yet to those who knew her best, perhaps will appear an imperfect Draught. But I pretend not to give a perfect Description of her. She was of such a modest Goodness, and her Virtues so industriously conceal'd, that I believe a just account of them is only known to God, and must then only be laid out at large to all the World, when he comes to reward openly what was done in secret. I have only design'd to draw this Fair Saint in such Virtues, as I desire from her Copy to make live things, and to translate into others Practice. For nothing is more instructing to the World, and more like to bring Virtue into Practice, than to draw it out in the Lives and Acts of Pious Persons. This shews Men what they are to do in Religion, and withal that it is a feasible thing; and therein both directs, and excites to Imitation. I am sure there is much to be learn'd in such a Pattern as this is, and as the World has great need, so I hope it will reap some Profit by such Examples. What

What further now remains for us, but to preserve the Memory of her Great Virtues always fresh in our Minds, and express the Copy of them in our Practice? For this is the best way of remembering the Dead, which brings in most Advantage to our selves, and most Honour to them; when the Piety, and Humility, and Justice, and Charity, and other Virtues of the Dead, are kept alive, and shewn in the Conversation of the Living. It is only these Virtues which carried those who are gone, and which can carry us too in the End to a joyful Resurrection. Where to in thy due Time, do thou, O! Blessed God, in thine abundant Goodness bring us all for Christ his sake. *Amen.*

What further now remains for us but
 to preserve the Memory of her Great
 Virtues alive, which in our Minds and
 express the Copy of them in our Actions.
 For this is the best way of retaining
 the Dead, which brings in most Advan-
 tage to our selves, and most Honour to
 them, to consider what was Good in
 them, when they lived, and Imitate
 and follow, and Charity, and other Vir-
 tues of the Dead, are representative, and
 follow in the Conversation of the Li-
 ving. It is only these Virtues which
 carried those who are gone, and which
 can carry us too in the End to a joyful
 Reunion. Wherein in the due
 time, do say, O! Blessed God, re-
 turn abundant Goodness to us all.

16AM11

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at

Coles - Hill in Warwickshire,

January 24. 1685.

On Occasion of the D E A T H

O F T H E

Right Honourable

SIMON Lord DIGBY,

Baron *DIGBY* of *Geashill* in *Ireland,*

Who deceased at *COLES-HALL,*

Jan. 19. 1685.

SERMON

ON THE



THE

Right Honourable

EARL OF DUBLIN

OF THE

OF THE

1817

To the Right Honourable
WILLIAM Lord DIGBY,
 BARON DIGBY
 OF
GEASHIL in IRELAND.

My Lord,

WHEN I Preach'd this Sermon to my own Parish, I had no Design to make it more publick. But since your Lordship desires it should come abroad, I readily submit to it. For, besides the just and great regard I have to your Lordship's Request, I would not be wanting in any thing, that may serve, tho' in a very small measure, to do Honour to that most dear, and exemplary Saint, your deceased Brother. I am conscious that the Draught which I have made of him is very imperfect: but such as it is, it sets out many things most worthy to be imitated, which may render it no lost Labour to the World. To do Right indeed to the Subject, I should speak in Proportion to what he deserved: but to do Service among those who survive, the saying any thing almost of him is sufficient, since it must needs be worth Mens while to hear any Particulars remarqued upon, where almost all are excellent. And so long as
 his

The Dedication.

his Character may benefit others, were he on Earth again, he, whose studied care it was to do good, and to share the praise of it, would readily pardon all the well-meant Errors and Defects of the Compiler, which make it wanting to his own Honour. And I am well assured your Lordship, who succeeds him in his Virtues, as well as in his Estate and Honour, will do so too.

In particular, my Lord, I hope your Lordship will reap Benefit by these Papers. For to your own Stock of an excellent Good Nature, and Religious Principles, you have made the discreet Choice of his admirable Example to improve both, and have already transcribed it, in some choice and commendable Methods. God grant your Lordship a lasting Continuance, and daily increase of those Noble Endowments, which make you Brothers in Virtue as well as in Blood, that you may not only equal, but exceed him in all those Excellencies and Pious Qualities, which set him out for a rare Pattern, and enjoy a much longer Life, wherein to display, and do good to the World with them. This, my Lord, is, and always must be the most hearty Prayer of,

Coles Hill,
Mar. 30.
1686.

Your Lordship's
in most Affectionate
Duty and Service,
John Kettlewell.

H E B. VI. 12.

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.

ONE of the best Encouragements to act, especially in difficult and perilous Undertakings, is other Mens Examples. And the Argument, which is like to have most force, and prevail most in Examples, is their good Events, when we see others, under the same Disadvantages and Hardships we suffer, to enjoy the same Divine Aids whereon we rest, and meet at last with the same success which we hope for. And this Argument the Apostle uses in this place, to persuade the *Hebrew* Converts, to Constancy and Perseverance in the Faith. *We desire*, says he, *that as hitherto ye have shown love towards God's Name in a free Profession of Religion, and ministred to the Saints, who suffer for him,*

him, (thereby openly owning and avowing both him and them) so ye would still continue to *shew the same diligence to the full assurance of your Hope unto the end.*

• *Nabgol.*

*That ye be not slothful and * faint-hearted, like those cowardly Apostates mention'd v. 6. whose Case is desperate, but followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.*

That which he particularly notes in these Examples, is their *Faith*, and *Patience*. Their *Faith*, that is their *firm trust in God, and belief of his Promises, relying on his Word under all Tryals.* And their *Patience*, that is, their *perseverance in this Trust, and expectation under all Delays, and constant adherence to him under all Difficulties.* These two the *Apostle* singles out from among many others, because they particularly serve his Purpose, which is to press *Perseverance in the Faith*, neither totally abjuring and falling off from Christ, as some had done, v. 6; nor forsaking the *Publick Assemblies* in perilous Times as

† *Heb. 10. 25.* † others did, which would shortly end in *renouncing Christ*: which *Perseverance* is best secured by these two *Virtues*. But good Examples give instances of many other *Virtues* wherein they are to be followed, and are equally serviceable to all other

other Duties as well as these: and in that latitude I shall consider them in the ensuing Discourse.

This Text excites the *Hebrews* to diligence in Good Works, from the Examples of deceased Saints, who are now reaping the Reward of all their former Pains, and inherit the Promises. And in treating on it, I shall

1. Show what use we are to make of Pious Mens Examples.

2. Propose one to your imitation.

1. I shall show what use we are to make of Pious Mens Examples.

A good Example is both a very instructive, and engaging thing. And the Examples of deceased Saints, have more Power and Efficacy than the Examples of the living. For nothing gives us so just an Estimate of any Excellencies; as the loss of them. And when once good Men are gone, there is no more Emulation, to make those who survive detract from what was imitable and praise-worthy in them. And after their Deaths, we look upon them not only as Good, but as Blessed, and so are apt to be influenced the more by their Virtues,

X

because

because of our Veneration for their Persons and Memories. And these the *Apostle* here proposes, directing us to look up to those, who are now no longer Candidates and Expectants, but *inherit the Promises*.

Now the use we are to make of their Examples, is both for a *Lesson to direct and teach us*, and also for a *Motive to hearten and excite us to an imitation of their Virtues*.

1. *We must use the Examples of Good Men for a Lesson, to direct and guide us in the way of Goodness*. Examples are more plainly instructive than Precepts. For Precepts prescribe Virtue in general Terms, which afterwards needs farther Reasoning to supply Circumstances, and accommodate them to particular Occasions. But Examples shew it in particular Instances, attired in all its various Forms and Circumstances, and fitted for Practice; so that when they are in sight, we have nothing left to do, but to follow what we see before us. And this use our *Saviour* directs us to make of *his Example*, to look upon his *Life* as a *Sermon*, and make his Practice our in-

instruction. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, Matt. II. 29.*

But in this use, of *learning our Duty from Good Examples*, we must take care to *chuse such Acts of Good Men for our imitation, as had a Law of God to direct them.* Good Mens Examples are no warranty to our Consciences, when they are alone. They make our Duty plainer by illustrating God's Laws; so that they help our Understanding of what is Good, when there is a Law with them. But they do not make any thing a Duty without a Law, and much less can they authorize any Action which is against a Law of God: so that we must not think it enough to justify us in any Action, that any Good Men have done the same.

1. *We may not imitate all the Actions of Good Men*; because no Men are perfectly Good in this World, but have a mixture of Good and Evil in them. They have not only Virtues to be followed, but Over-sights and Humane Passions to be pitied and avoided. And these being faults and blemishes in them, can give us no security in following them.

2. *We may not imitate all such Acts of theirs, as the Scripture recites without blaming.*

ming. Such is *Jacob and Rebekkah's Fraud*, in making *blind Isaac* go out of his way, and *Stealing away Esau's blessing*, Gen. 27. And *Holy David's* putting his Friend *Jonathan*, to excuse his not attending upon *Saul* at the Feast of the *New Moon*, by making a feign'd Story for him, 1 Sam. 20. 5, 6. And by such another Fiction getting the *Shew-bread* and *Goliath's Sword* from *Ahimelech*, which occasioned the Death of *fourscore and five of the Priests*, and of *all the Inhabitants, not only Men*, but also *Women and Children in the City of Nob*, 1 Sam. 21. and c. 22. These, with other such like Actions of Good Men, the Scripture relates by way of bare History and Narrative, without making Descants and Reflections, or passing any Censure on them. But the Silence of the Holy Pen-men in this Point, is no sign of their Approbation. God has plainly enough laid down the Rules, whereby Men ought to act in these cases, and from which we are to judge of their actions. And therefore having related the Facts which were done, they leave others to bring them to the Rules, and see whether they are according to them. When any Good Man's action then is related in Scripture, 'tis no sufficient justification

stification of it to say it is *not censured*, unless it can be shewn moreover that it is *not liable to censure*; that is, that it is against no Law of God, which both the Holy Pen-men and we are to censure and judge of all Actions by.

Nay further,

3. *We may not imitate all such Actions, as we find justified and commended in the Scriptures.* The Reason of this is, because the Scriptures commend, not only purely virtuous, but also mix'd Actions, which are only justifiable on some accounts, but culpable on others. Thus the Lord in the Parable doth by his *needy Steward*, who at his going off provides for his future subsistence among his Lords Tenants, by a false Stating of his Masters accounts: *he commended the unjust Steward that he had done wisely*, Luk. 16. 8. Where, tho' the Lord commends his Fore-sight, that he acted Providently, yet, had he design'd to speak to it, he would as much have blamed his Fraud and Dishonesty. And thus our Saviour doth by *David*, when he speaks of his *eating the Shew-bread*: he justifies his *eating of it*, tho' it were appropriated to the Priests, and was *Holy*, because all that was superseded by his Hunger and Necessity, Matt. 12. 3, 4:

But altho' he there maintains his *eating of the Holy Bread*; yet are we not thence to conclude, he would also have defended that Falshood whereby he procured it, 1 *Sam.* 21. 2. Thus St. *Paul*, among his other *Worthies*, praises *Gideon*, and *Sampson*, and *Jephtha*, Heb. 11. 32. But that which he would recommend to imitation among us from their Practice, is only their *Faith*, not their Hostilities and *Warlike Invasions*. And the like judgment we may reasonably pass upon the Commendation given to the *Egyptian Midwives*, who with their Pious Charity in saving the Lives of poor Innocents, joyn'd Falshood to their own Prince, to whom, when they reply'd any thing at all, they ought not to have given a false Answer in their Examinations. Therefore, says *Moses*, *God dealt well with the Midwives, and made them Houses*; thereby not approving their Insincerity, but only rewarding their Pious Charity, *Exod.* 1. v. 16. to v. 22. In these, and the like Instances, when the Good part in a mix'd action is the most eminent, as in the case of the *Midwives*; or when the ill Part happen'd through a pitiable fear, and great temptation to it, as in the case both of them, and *David*: God, who

who is much more prone to approve, than to spy Faults; and had rather observe what may make for us, than what would make against us, is pleased oft-times to take notice of the Virtues of his Servants, which are to their Praise, without mentioning the Defects intermix'd, which would be to their Disparagement. But because in these mix'd actions God commends what he likes, we must not think that he also approves what his Law forbids and punishes. The Ill part of Good mens Actions, their Faults and Defects, are no ground of his Commendation, and so can give no Warranty for our imitation of them.

One Example, indeed, there is, which is perfectly without Sin, and that is the Example of our *Blessed Saviour, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his Mouth,* 1 Pet. 2. 22. But altho' we are secure, that in his Example nothing justly deserv'd blame, yet must we not draw even it as a Rule in all Points for our imitation. For he was a Person of a most peculiar Office and Station, and many things which he did were in virtue of that, which are not compatible to us who follow him. He * *fasted forty days* * Mat. 4. 2. *and forty nights,* at his entrance upon the

*Exod. 34.
28.

†Joh. 2. 16,
27.
|| Mat. 23.

* Luk. 13.
32.

Office of being a Law-giver to the Church, as * *Moses* had done before him. He *whipt the buyers and sellers out of the Temple, and overthrew the Tables of the Money-changers, without any visible authority of a publick Character or Warrant from the Magistrate, but only as he was the † Son of God, and because the Spirit of Zeal was upon him. He || freely and openly reproved the Scribes and Pharisees, those great Rulers among the Jews, and call'd King Herod * Fox, by virtue of his Prophetical Commission. These, and several other things he acted, not as an ordinary person, by his Pattern to lead on other Men: but as being acted by an extraordinary Spirit, and in pursuit of his Mediatory Office and Undertaking, which is a thing wherein we must not pretend to imitate him.*

'Tis true, our Lord's Example is a Rule to direct us in our Duty, and he intended it should be so, calling us to be his *followers* by treading in the *same steps*, and to be *meek and lowly*, as we saw he was. But in taking Measures of our Duty from it, *we must not conclude any thing a Duty barely from his Pattern, but only where his Laws say the same.* For not to be minute in all the particulars, where-
in

in our Blessed Saviour's Example may instruct us, the safest and easiest Argument from his Actions in this case, is when they are Instances and Illustrations of his own Precepts. It is not his Practice, but his Command which makes any thing a Duty; and when he practises according to it, that exemplifies the Commandment in its lively Forms and Circumstances, and is a more sensible Manifestation of the Duty injoyn'd by it. The adding of his Practice, where he has given a Precept, serves for a clearer Illustration of it: but if there be no Precept, his Practice alone doth not bind, nor make any thing become a Duty which before was not one. And accordingly those Instances, wherein the Scriptures recommend his Example to us, are things injoyn'd by his own Laws. As when we are bid to be *meek and lowly*, as he was, *Matt. 11. 29*; to inherit the virtue of *Blessing* our Persecutors and Slanderers from his practice, *1 Pet. 3. 9*; to *follow his steps* in a *Patient Resign'd endurance* of unjust Sufferings, without railing or wrathful returns, *1 Pet. 2. 20, 21, 23.* and the like.

And as this is true of the Example of Christ, so likewise of the Examples of
other

other Holy Persons recorded in Scripture. For even their unmix'd Actions, which were not blameable in them, are sometimes unfit for our imitation, being perform'd in pursuit of peculiar Offices, or authorized by such circumstances of things and other special inducements, as they had at that time, and which do not agree to us in common with them.

1. Several of their Actions, which the Scripture justifies were by virtue of immediate divine Warranty and Commission, which would have fallen under a just censure, but
 *Exod. 11. for that reason. Thus the Israelites * bor-
 2, 3. rowed of the Egyptians, and pay'd not again, because God, the supreme Disposer of all mens Goods, had given them
 † Num. 25. that exprefs Direction. † Phineas, tho'
 7, 8. a private Man, did a Publick act of Justice upon a Malefactor, without expecting the Forms of Law, and the Magistrate's Order for it, because he had a Particular Divine impulse (a thing sometimes vouchsafed under the Jewish Dispensation) and the Spirit of Zeal was upon him. || Jehu took Arms against the
 || 2 King. 9. House of Ahab, and slew his Master Joram by a particular Command of God, which would have been a most detestable Treason

son and Rebellion without it. The *Holy Prophets* are most publick and plain in their Reproofs, both of *Princes* and *Priests*, calling them * *Companions of* ^{Isa. i. 10.} *Thieves, Rulers of Sodom, † Blind Watch-* ^{23.} *men, Dumb Dogs, greedy Dogs, and the* ^{† Isa. 56.} *like,* ^{10, 11.} because there were such Profligate Powers then; and tho' they were in Authority, this was *no criminal speaking evil of Dignities*, because the Prophets spoke not of themselves, but only delivered God's Message, which he had put into their Mouths. These bold and open Reprehensions of higher Powers were good in them, because the Lord had bidden them. But this is no justification at all to the *black-mouth'd Quakers*, and other *railing Rabsbekah's* of our time, who have neither the like just occasion, nor, if they had, can reasonably pretend to any such Prophetical Office and Commission.

2. Other of their Actions were commendable upon *their suitableness to the present circumstances and particular state of things at that time, which would have deserv'd no praise, but rather reproof at another season.* Such was *David's eating the Shew-bread* in the pressing necessity of his Hunger, and when he could have no other;

other ; which had been unjustifiable and blame-worthy out of that circumstance, and at any time when common Bread was to be had. Such also was St. Paul's

* Act. 16. * *circumcising Timothy*, when he chose him out to gather *Jewish Converts*, because that would help him to gain upon the *Jews*, who at that time having a great Devotion to the Law of *Moses*, would not only be slow to receive instruction from, but also to give access and converse freely with an uncircumcised person. But because he did it in this advantageous circumstance, we must not conclude it may be done indifferently in any others, or to comply with their Error, who press the Necessity of Circumcision and the Law of *Moses* : in which alteration of the case, the Apostle himself was so far from doing the same again, that he inflexibly refus'd to *circumcise Titus* when the Necessity of it was urged upon him by the false Brethren and Judaizers, Gal. 2. 3, 4, 5. Such again was the practice of * *having all things common at Jerusalem*, when the Necessities of the poor Saints could not otherwise be supply'd, and the Confiscations coming upon the Church for Christ's sake, would let no Christian there call any thing his own long.

* Act. 4. 34, 35.

long. And the Apostolical Rules of
** holding no acquaintance or commerce with * 2 Theff.*
stubborn contemners of Church-Orders, and 3. 6. 14. &c
notorious evil Livers, which, whilst the 1 Cor. 5.
 Church was encompass'd with Heathens,
 so that its own Members would seek
 shelter from it, and the Offenders were
 fewer in Number, and so unable to pro-
 tect themselves, was like to reduce them.
 These practices were good then, because
 prudent in their circumstances, and pro-
 per for that season: but would not de-
 serve the like approbation in those, who
 should go to imitate them unseasonably
 at another time.

3. Lastly, Some Actions of good Men,
 particularly under the Old Testament,
 were justifiable whilst that Dispensation stood,
 which would be criminal in us now, who are
 under a Law more perfect. Such was † Eli- † 2 King. 1.
 as's calling down Fire from Heaven upon his 10, 12,
 Adversaries, which agreed well enough
 with that State. But when the Disciples
 James and John went about to do the
 like, and pleaded his Example in justifi-
 cation of it, Jesus rebuked them, and told
 them his Dispensation required another
 manner of Spirit, Luk. 9. 54, 55. Such
 also are the Liberties, of having many
 Wives, of putting away their Wives for eve-
 ry

ry cause and dislike, of cursing Enemies, and praying down Judgments upon their Heads, which no good Christian must presume to do, because he finds it done * often by Holy David in the Psalms, and by † others of the Holy Prophets, since our Saviour has out-stripp'd Moses, and rais'd our Duty higher in these Points.

* Psal. 35.
36, 80.
Psal. 10.
† Jer. 18.
21.

As to this Use then of good Mens Examples, viz. taking the information and measures of our Duty from them; their Examples are not sufficient to warrant our Consciences when they are alone, but only when we see the Law and Rule too which they went upon. It is not enough to justify us in any Action, that they did it, unless it may appear that they did well in it, and that it is according to Law, which shews what they ought to do. Their practice is not to give Laws, but is it self to be ruled and judged by them, as ours is. If they act against any Law of God, that Law condemns them, and so will never justify us for following them in an unlawful thing. But if they acted according to it, we may safely follow them: but that is not upon the authority of their Pattern, but of God's Law, which justifies both us and them. They are only his Laws, not other

other Mens Practice, which at last must judge us. *God shall judge the World according to my Gospel*, says St. Paul, Rom. 2. 16. and *my Word shall judge Men at the last Day*, says our Saviour, *Joh. 12. 48*. And if Laws must govern our Sentiments, bare Examples, without Laws, can never be sufficient to guide and authorize our practice. So that in learning our Duty from good Examples, we must seek to understand a Command more fully and usefully by seeing it exemplified, but not think bare Examples make Virtues, and authorize Actions where there are no Commands at all. And this I have insisted the longer on, because in judging of their Duty, Men are generally prone to build too much upon the Examples of such, as have been eminent for the Practice of it. They find it easier to follow what they see others do, than to enquire what they themselves ought to do: and so by an indiscriminate imitation, sometimes turn those Pious Examples, which were intended for the Souls most wholsom Food, into its Poison.

2. The *second* Use we are to make of Pious Examples, is for a *Motive*, to *hearten* and *excite* us to an *imitation* of their *Virtues*.

This

This is the most proper use of Examples, when Laws have made Duties, and establish'd the goodness of Actions, to be an argument and incitement to the Practice of them. This end they serve, by working upon that natural Emulation which is in Men, who care not to be out-done in an advantageous or praise-worthy thing; and seeing others reap Honour or Happiness from any Performances, are thereby much incited to attempt the same. Now the Example of Pious Persons spurs us on to an imitation of their Virtues, both as it shews the Performance of our Duty to be *very desirable*, and *fairly possible*.

1. As it shews it *very desirable*, and inflames us with a noble eagerness, and earnest longing to do as they have done. That which principally doth this in Examples, is the *honourable End*, and *happy Event* of them: For the Glory and Greatness of the Rewards, shews the desirableness of any Service, and is fittest to work upon our Emulation. And this the Scripture particularly directs us to look to in the Examples of Holy Men. *Ye have heard of the Patience of Job, and have seen the End of the Lord, how bountifully he*
re-

rewarded him for it, says St. James to the Jewish Converts, when he exhorted them to bear *Affliction* patiently as he did, *Jam. 5. 10, 11. In running our hard Race with Patience*, says St. Paul, let us look unto Jesus, who endured much worse, and is now set down for it at the right hand of God, *Heb. 12. 1, 2. Be ye followers of them*, saith the Apostle in the Text, *who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises. And remember them, who have spoken to you the Word of God, whose Faith follow, considering the end of their Conversation*, and what Eternal Bliss they got by it, *Heb. 13. 7.* Thus doth the Scripture propose the End of their Services, their purchased Glories and Rewards, as the most Powerful Argument to enkindle noble Desires in others, and gain Followers. So that if we would give our selves the Benefit of Deceased Saints Examples, we must consider the Blissful End of them, and often reflect, how their Piety has placed them in a state of most pure, perfect, and endless Happiness, where they are at absolute Rest from all their Labours, and eternally exempt from all Sorrows, Fears, and Cares; where they enjoy all their Hearts can desire, and live always in the Presence,

and about the Throne of God, whence they daily receive Communications inef-fable, and Glories incomparable, and such ravishing Delights, and inward Sa-tisfactions, as no Fancy can reach till we come to feel them; all which they are to enjoy for evermore. This is the in-comparable Reward of all the good they did, and a due and serious Consi-deration of it will inflame in us an Emu-lous Desire, and mightily ingage us to do the same.

2. Their Example encourages us to imitate their Virtues, as it shews such imitation *fairly possible*. They were Men of like Passions, Over-sights, and Infir-mities; and subject to like Trials and Temptations with our selves. And since notwithstanding all these Difficulties and Discouragements, they were successful in their virtuous Attempts, we may justly take Heart, and hope to be so too. For our Discouragements are no greater than theirs were, and our Assistances from the Spirit and good Providence of God will be no less. He will be the same in all Times, to all that labour in expectation of his Aid, and Faith of his Gracious Promises. So that if we will imitate their Labours, we may promise our selves

to experiment their Success, and to prosper and be victorious as they have been before us. And this use also the Scripture makes of good Examples. St. Paul endeavours to support the Faith and Patience of the *Corinthians*, by telling them *there hath no Temptation taken them, but such as is common to Man*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. and St. Peter bids the persecuted Christians to be *stedfast in the Faith, knowing that the same Afflictions are accomplish'd in their Brethren, which are in the World*, 1 Pet. 5. 9. and St. Paul exhorting the *Hebrews* to *Patience in their Race*, sets before them the *Cloud of Witnesses*, who were Glorious in their Successes, tho' of like Passions and Trials with themselves, *Heb. 12. 1*. Thus to strengthen his Faith in God's Mercy, the Psalmist says *he will remember his Wonders of old, and talk of his doings* for others, which would encourage him to hope for the same himself, *Psal. 77. 11, 12*. And St. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, that *whether he be afflicted, or comforted, it is for their Consolation and Salvation; and is effectual in their enduring of the same Sufferings which he suffers; they having thereby, not only God's Promise, but also his Experience to assure them of the same support in their Afflictions,*

which he found in his, 2 Cor. 1. 6. Thus was one great Benefit they design'd Men in proposing good Examples to them, the overcoming their Diffidence, either of God, or of themselves, and possessing them with good Hopes of Success in their Attempts after any Virtues. And therefore if we would give our selves a just Advantage from the Examples of Deceased Saints, we must duly consider their Discouragements and Assistances; and that as they were of like Passions and Temptations with us, so shall we find like Grace and Success with them, if we * faint not in a holy Undertaking.

* Heb. 12.
3.

Having thus shown what use we are to make of Pious Mens Examples, and how fit they are, either to be Guides and Directions to our Consciences, or a Spur and Incitement to our Practice: I proceed now

2. *To propose one to your Imitation.*

It has pleas'd the All-wise God to take from us an excellent Person, who whilst he lived was a bright Example, and a publick Good; whose Life could credit an Holy Religion, and whose Rank and
Quality

Funeral of the Lord Digby.

143

Quality in the World afford Interest and Support to it. He was a clear Instance of many noble Virtues, and both a discreet and zealous Stickler in promoting them. As for his *Funeral*, he desired it might be Private, without Splendor and Ceremony, wherewith his Friends would otherwise have begun to pay Honour to his Memory. And this he did out of a Generous Contempt of worldly Show and Pomp, and a fix'd Inclination of expressing his Liberality, which indeed was Great, in Pious and Charitable Works, which are things of solid use: Chusing such Methods of Expence, as were like to bring most Glory to God, and Good to Men, not such as were only empty and unprofitable signs of Honour to himself. This way of Carrying him to his Grave, occasioned no Publick Meeting at his Funeral, which superseded such Accounts, as might otherwise have been expected of him at that time. But I think an Example, from which so much is to be learnt, ought not to pass without some Remarques upon it. And altho' I do not intend a just and full Description of him, yet that you of this Place, who have been Eye-witnesses of his Conversation, may not

lose the Benefit of such a Pattern, I shall draw him out in some rude Lines for your Imitation. And if we can be so wise and careful as to imitate him, that will make a Recompence for our Loss, and in part supply the want we must all expect to find of him.

He was a Person of good Understanding, without haughty Opinions, and conceit of his own Knowledge, which is the greatest hindrance to any Man's gaining more, and growing wiser. He was of a quick, and clear Apprehension; of a Temper very sedate and calm, free to hear, and patient to consider of such Reasons, as were offer'd to him; of Sagacity to direct his Thoughts to the right Mark, where the stress lay in any Point; and of a well-pois'd Judgment, in discerning which was the right side. He did not affect to hear himself talk, and ingross the discourse, but was industriously careful to appear, as one who desired rather to learn than to teach, and to be free to hear other Mens sense, as well as to give his own. But what he took occasion to speak, was pertinent and proper, with such insight into things, and judicious consideration of them, as made

made it well worth the Hearing. He had a very good Talent of Reason, and was careful so to imploy it, as might enable him to give the best and most unblameable Account of it; that is, in understanding himself and his own Duty, in bringing Honour to God, and doing Good to Men, and fitting himself to be serviceable to his Friends, and to his Country.

As for *Religion*, that was the height of all his Aims, and the most open of all his Professions, wherein he endeavour'd most to be a Good Proficient himself, and which he most sought to Propagate among others. Of which, for your godly Imitation, I shall give these following Accounts.

He was a Person of *true tenderness of Conscience*, very impressive, and soon touch'd with any thing, that had true Goodness in it. But altho' he was thus justly tender, yet he was not of a scrupulous Temper; *i. e.* apt to run away from Trifles, and startle at such things, as have in them no illness, or hurt at all. And to prevent being mis-led into Doubts and Perplexities, by any unnecessary

cessary Rigors or unwary Expressions, which sometimes occur in Good Books, he was studiously careful to get distinct Notions, and to discern what things recommended in them were Matters of necessary Duty, and what only of Prudent advice and Godly direction: which thing, if it had been more remarked by some who have written Good Books, as well as by those that read them, several laudable Directions, that have occasion'd much Trouble to some Pious Minds, would have proved only Profitable Helps to Mens Practice, without engendring Doubts and Scruples, or any ways insnaring of their Consciences.

Next to this true Tenderneſs, and intire Sense of Duty, which I think is the first, and must always be the leading Excellence in any Good Man, since our Practice of any Duties must follow upon our Opinions of them: I shall recommend to you his *intire care* and *regard to observe all*. This, indeed, was the Sum of all his Prayers, of his Studies, and Endeavours, to be an upright and intire Man; *i. e.* to have an eye to all the Commandments, and observe God in every thing which he had required of him.

him. To keep up a constant Sense of his Weaknesses and Miscarriages, he took daily Accounts of his daily Practice, besides what he did with more care and exactness at set times. And his Examinations of himself stood not only in the most notorious and weighty Duties, but also in such others, as tho' they be equally injoyn'd by Christ; yet in the Practice, and too often in the Opinion of the World, are least observed. He judg'd himself for his *uncharitable Surmises*, and *hard Censures*, for his *unvary propagating any reproachful Falshoods*, which he had heard of his Brethren, nay for his *unnecessary utterance of any real miscarriages* which he knew by them, for his *omissions to discourage an Ill thing, or to embrace and promote a Good one* when it lay before him. These, and such other less observ'd Errors of the Tongue, and Sins of Conversation, and other less noted Breaches of Duty, for which, tho' Christ at last will judge us all, yet so many otherwise serious neglect to judge and reform themselves, were the Matter of his Accounts and Confessions.

And when he had confess'd them, his Care, like a Good Christian, was to *amend them*, and to be more watchful to prevent

prevent the like again. The plain truth is, he carefully studied this Art, as one who greatly desired, and wisely intended to be expert in it. And among all the Methods which he took for this end, the principal were these.

The chief Cause why Men, who in the General Aim and Bent of their Minds are set upon their Duty, are yet for all that liable to transgress it, is because it is slipt out of their Thoughts, and they want a present Sense of it when they should be govern'd. by it. To prevent this, his first Care was what in him lay to *familiarize all particular Duties to his mind.* In order to this, *one* way he chose, was out of Books to extract a Scheme, containing all particulars in a short compass, which might easily be inured to his Thoughts: *another* was, to have all the Sins which he needed to confess, and the Graces which he was to beg of God, set down as particularly, as might be, in his daily Devotions. His great Desire and Care was to make his Prayers serve for Lessons and Instructions; that his Confessions of Sin might shew him what he was to shun, and his Prayers for Grace be Monitors to his Practice, and his daily Petitions to Almighty God, become

become Rules to himself. And intending thus to live according to his Prayers, he desired in them to be very particular in the Points of Practice, that in his daily Devotion, he might not only have the Benefit of a Supplication, but withal the daily Use and Admonition of a Sermon.

Having taken this care to maintain in himself a present lively Sense of all Duties, his next care was to *study, what were the most expedite, easy, and useful Rules of practising them.* And after he had wisely chosen, and proposed these Rules to himself, he was careful to observe them, and took account of himself how he swerv'd from them: remembring in the mean time, that many of these Rules were not necessary Duties, but only prudent Means, and such as he had set himself, but God had not prescrib'd him. These Rules, with the Sins, which by Nature or Custom, or the Course of Temptation, he was most exposed to, and which they were design'd to Cure, he set down in writing. And that both his Dangers, and his Remedies, might be kept fresh and familiar upon his Mind, his Method was *to have two fixt Days in every Week, to peruse and consider*

sider of them, that so, if he did forget himself, it should be but for a short time, and that within a very few Days, he might return to his former Guard again.

In Sum, the Course of his Repentance was plainly a most studied and contrived thing. He forethought ways, how to carry on good motions; how to prevent surprizes; or, when at any time he fell, how to recover himself by an immediate repentance; how to prepare for the temptations of any day, or business; how to maintain a constant liveliness of Heavenly Affections, by sending up Divine Breathings and Ejaculations, not only every day, but almost every hour, more or less. So that Repentance was the Art he studied, and was as truly his daily Business, as some Mens Trades and Occupations, others Vices, and the Vanities and Diversions of a third sort are theirs.

This was his care of good living in the General, but I shall expose it still nearer to your view and Godly imitation in some Particulars.

To begin with the *Piety and Devotion of his Spirit*, he had a *Profound Honour and Reverence for Almighty God*, and *Love for Religion*, which, without the Extremes,

tremes, either of Fear, or Affectation, he would openly profess and own in a licentious and prophane Age, that thought such Pretences to Religion to bewray want of Spirit or Breeding. He did not only take care of the Practice, but espouse the Party of true Godliness: he would bravely and wisely plead for it, and labour to gain Profelytes to it. He had a compassionate Sense of the Difficulties and Temptations which attend Men of Quality, through the World's adopting many wicked Practices into Rules of Good Breeding, and fixing such things into Laws of Honour, as are not only a most open Breach of the plainest and most important Precepts of Religion, but the grossest Absurdities to any sober Reason and common Discretion. And having wisely consider'd and prepar'd his own Mind against them; where he could, he was glad to convince and strengthen others; and where he could not, he pitied and griev'd for them; lamenting to see some, in other respects very wise and sober Men, too deeply tainted with the commonness of the infection. To ingage his Friends to a serious and powerful Sense of Religion, he would follow them with
Good

Good Counsels, which he would manage discreetly, and time seasonably, laying wait for them in their most impressive Moods, especially after any great Dangers, or in the time of Sickness, and wherein he would reason clearly, endeavouring to convince and persuade them, both from the cogent Reason of things, and from the more affecting Argument of his own experience. Whilst he lived, he would urge them by Advice and Importunities; and at his Death, by the most affectionate Messages and dying Intreaties. In pursuit of this End, he would stoop to any thing, and sometimes make himself a Companion of mean Persons, not only sending Books or Instructors to them, but making repeated Personal Addresses, and becoming a Preacher to them himself. And as for his Servants and Dependants, with the care of whom he knew God had particularly intrusted him, he was more especially careful to have them told their Duty, and observant how they practised it, teaching them to Honour the Name of God, to attend duly upon his Worship in the Church, and particularly upon that highest Instance of it, the Holy Sacrament, to be constant at Prayers

ers in his own Family, and frequently taking Notice of such as neglected them, declaring that his Business should not be admitted as their hindrance and excuse. Thus was he resolv'd, so far as either his Persuasions, Example, or Authority would prevail with them, that they who serv'd him, should fear and serve his Lord and Master too.

And then as for his *Prayers and Devotions*, which are the very vital Breath of a Religious Spirit; as in his *Closet*, so in *Publick*, he gave an Example most worthy to be imitated, shewing both much Zeal and Discretion in them.

He was, as you all know, a *careful and constant Attender upon God's Publick Worship*, and so desirous to bring others to do the same, that when for the convenience of the Family, he has on any Festivals first had the Service of God at home; to induce others by his Example, he has several times gone presently after to Church to have it there again. And in this he was not content to attend by halves, but was careful to come to the beginning of the Service: sincerely desiring rather to come before the time, and with Patience wait the Beginning of the Prayers, than to lose any part of them.

them. For he thought it argued a great Coldness, and want of Zeal for God, as indeed it doth, to use delays in paying him attendance; and tho' they be as forward as any in expecting of a Blessing from him, yet to be among the hindmost when any Honour and Service is to be paid to him: wherein I hope those among you, who are too remiss in this Point, will learn to follow him. And as for the Holy Sacrament, tho' he was laborious in recollection, and much in devotion against that time, yet were the returns of it, whereat he was always a devout Attendant, so far from being a Burden to him, that he several times desired they might be more often.

Thus careful and constant an Attender was he upon the Publick Worship and Service of God. And whilst he was at Church, we all know the *Gravity, the Reverence and Devoutness of his Carriage.*

His *Behaviour* there was *grave and composed*, and a Habit of Seriousness visibly dwelt upon his Spirit; which testified a Mind duly sensible, that there he was in the more especial Presence of Almighty God, and negotiating Affairs of greatest moment, which require the
utmost

utmost intention of Mind, and are not to be undertaken by a light and trifling, a remiss and stupid, a desultory and careless Spirit.

It was also very *Reverent*, and in *Decent* show of Profound Humility and Submission of Spirit, to his awful Apprehensions of God, adding *humble* and *respectful Postures*, and praying always upon his Knees. For which he had so Conscientious a Regard himself, that as he has told me, he was really scandaliz'd to see the careless, neglectful, and misbecoming Gestures which some others would use at Church in their Prayers: being uneasy in himself to see Men, even when they profess'd to honour and pray to God, to do it in such careless Postures as shew'd not Honour, but Neglect; and wherein, tho' they presume to pray to God, yet they dare not come to Petition any Powerful, or Great Man.

And as for the *Devotion of his Heart*, when he appear'd among you in any Publick Worship, how easily might you observe a Spirit Greatly and Piously affected? How humble and hearty was he in his Confessions? how fervent in Holy Desires? how affectionate in Praises and Thanksgivings? In a word, he discover'd

a profound Sense of God's Majesty and adorable Excellencies, a full Conviction of his own Meanness and Sinfulness, and an high Esteem and ardent Desires of the Favour of God, and of the Mercies of another World. All which Devout Tempers and Apprehensions were lively drawn out in his outward Meen, and yet without appearance of Vanity and Ostentation.

This was the Religious Behaviour of this Pious and Excellent Person towards Almighty God. And as for his *Carriage among Men*, it was such as became a Heart so piously and devoutly affected.

He was a Person remarkably *Temperate*. His Quality and Fortune would have supply'd him with any thing, to gratify and caress any Sense and Appetite: But in the midst of all these, he chose rather to deny himself, and triumph over them. The Power of abstaining from what Meat, and Sensual Delight he pleased, was a Point of Virtue he particularly affected: and this made him so far from indulging the Body, that he burden'd it with more Severity than his Friends thought it could well bear. And as for his *Sobriety* in a Temperate use of Drink, to say he would
not

not exceed himself, is but a small part of his Praise, who, so far as he could help it, would by no means suffer it in others. He would lay no Shares to draw in others to excess, nor suffer it to be done by those that depended on him. Nay, if any Persons were inclinable to overload themselves, his Conscience would not allow him to seek the Reputation of being Hospitable, by ministering to their Excess. For he thought, and he thought truly, that to minister to any Vice, is to partake in other Mens Sins. And that a Man may as innocently furnish out Opportunities and Supplies, to those who are seeking to gratify their unclean Luts; or greedy Rapine, as set out excessive Stores of Wine to those, who are playing Prizes in Excess, and contest like Proffest Champions in Debauchery. He ministers to other Mens Sins in both these Cases, only in the two former he helps them to sin against their Brethren, but in this last against their own selves.

He was very *sincere*, and *plain-hearted* in his Speeches and Professions, making this his Rule, *Never to promise any thing, but what he intended exactly to perform*, and to mark down what he had promised, lest he should forget it. Nay, even in Civilities

and Ceremonious Addresses, wherein the World are most subject to transgress, the Measure whereby he govern'd himself was, That *he might safely speak less, but never profess more than he meant, nor tell a Lye even in Complement.*

In his *Dealings* he would be just, not daring, I will not say to Cozen by *Down-right Fraud* and *Falseness*, but even to prey on others by *over-reach of Wit* and *Skill*, in *Play*, or *Business*: or if at any time he forgot himself in this Point, he durst not rest, without finding out some way to make *Restitution* of it. Nay, in his *Pastimes*, he was Conscientiously careful, not only of the *Honesty* and *Fairness* of his getting, but also of the *Ability* of others losing to him. And some Men of mean Estates, being forward to mix themselves with Persons of Quality in their *Diversions*, when, by their forwardness to Wage with him, he has fairly won what he thought their Family at Home would find a want of, he has taken Care secretly to convey it back to the Wife and Children, without the Profuse Husband's knowing any thing of it. This Charitable Care and Christian Tenderness, was very agreeable with that Rule which he had set himself in his *Diversions*, which
was

was to be no gainer by any Games, but what he lost should go as the Price of his own Pleasure, but what he won should accrue to the Poor, and the Needy should be his Receivers.

As his Justice was Exemplary and Great, so his Charity was Noble and Eminent. He would do generous and noble Things, and these he loved, so far as he could, to steal in upon the World, and carry so private, that unless the Deed proclaim'd it self, there should be no expectation rais'd, nor noise made of it; hoping thereby to secure a greater Purity of Intention in the Good he did, and intitle it the more to his Reward, who sees what is done in secret. In distributing his Alms, his Rule was first to distinguish between Objects, that he might give wisely, to supply real Wants, not to support Idleness, and then to give freely and liberally, with all secrecy. In pursuance of his compassionate Sense of poor Peoples Necessities, he would sometimes take occasion privately to visit them, and give them Relief. And being more especially sensible of the great Miseries they suffer in Sicknes, which by a little Physick seasonably administred, would oftentimes soon be ended, and thereby they be both eas'd of their uncomfortable Distempers,

and enabled more speedily to return to their Employments to maintain themselves and their Families: He agreed with a Physician for a yearly Pension to take care of all the Sick Poor of his own Parish, and ply them with Remedies proper for their Distempers, requiring him to say nothing of this his Exemplary and wisely-chosen, because most wanted, Charity, being careful only to secure to himself the Virtue of the Act, and then let who would have the Praise and Honour of it. Out of his sincere Zeal for the Honour of God, and the Beauty of his House and Worship, he has adorn'd the Choire of this Church, and nobly augmented our Furniture of Communion-Plate. Upon the Death of his excellent Lady, besides his Liberality to every adjacent Parish for a present Distribution, he allotted a considerable Sum to the use of the Poor for a perpetual Settlement. And now at his own Death, he has given a much greater for the Use of the Poor of this Parish, and restor'd two Impropriations, one whereof is very considerable, to the Church; viz. the Impropriate Tythes of this Parish of *Coles-Hill*, and of the Parish of *Upper-Whitacre*, to those two respective Churches. The
Be-

Bestowing of the two *Impropriations*, was a thing which he had fully design'd in the time of his Health. For as for *Upper-Whitacre*, he had purchased it with a Design of annexing it, the Summer before he died. And as for *Coles-Hill*, by a solemn Paper left Sign'd with his own Hand, to provide against all Casualties, lest he should die before he had accomplish'd what he intended, he took care to tell his surviving Relations, how upon mature Study and Deliberation, he was also fully and Religiously resolv'd to restore it, *which, as he words it, belonging to the Church by several Titles, ought not to be withheld.* These are noble Instances of an extraordinary Piety towards God, and Generous Affection to the Church of *England*, for whose encouragement he design'd them, for which God, I doubt not, has rewarded him, and all future Ages shall celebrate his Memory and call him Blessed, whilst this Church and State shall stand.

This was the Charity of his Purse. And as for all the other instances of Charity in conversation, as *long-suffering, civility in carriage, mercifulness, candor in passing interpretations, Patience upon Indignities*, and the like, without which, as

1 Cor. 13.
3.

St. Paul * says, *giving all our Goods to feed the Poor will signify nothing* : he had an equal Regard, and conscientious Care of them too. His Religion did not sowre into moroseness, nor his Severities to himself render him peevish and uneasy towards others. To set him out to your imitation in all the Virtues of Conversation, I shall not describe his Carriage in all the Particulars, which would take up too much time, but rather chuse to set down the Rules whereby he govern'd himself, which will be, as the more compendious, so I hope as profitable a way for those, who are dispos'd to follow him. Those Rules, as they appear in his own Papers, were such as these ; viz. *To cross himself in any eager Desire, and in things most to his own Humour ; to prefer others Ease before his own ; not to neglect, or overlook the meanest Person ; to stoop to the meanest Offices to do others kindnesses ; not to be high in his Expectations from others (one of the best Securities against being exceptious) to own the least kindness he had receiv'd, and be really inclined to return it ; to forget all injuries done to him, and stifle all thoughts of resenting them ; not to speak at a venture, without thinking ; whensoever he proposed any Reasons, to do it with a modest*

deft deference ; not to mention any thing to his own Praise ; nor to discommend others ; nor to strive to out-do, or vie in the least matters. These, and such like, were the Maxims which he propos'd to live by in conversing with others, and whereby he judg'd himself in his Retirements and Self-examinations. And the Effect of them was answerable, in a truly humble, courteous, and obliging Carriage. He was careful not to pass *unjust Censures*, nor shew any *unchristian Violence* which might cause just offence, even to his Enemies, and to those whom he most oppos'd in Interests and Opinions ; making it his frequent Prayer, to help it the better into his daily Practice, that with *just Zeal* against their *Errors*, he might still preserve all *due Charity* for their *Persons*, and never use any sinful Means and unlawful Expedients, in opposing the worst things, or pursuing the most Pious, Publick, and Generous Ends in the World.

As he was thus careful to practise this excellent Virtue of Charity himself, so was he very studious to *maintain it among others*. He sought to deserve the Title of a *Peace-maker* ; and when he heard of Differences ready to flame out, he would interpose himself a Protector of the oppressed

pressed Parties, and hear Complaints and Pleadings, and compose and adjust Differences; and if the Authority of Reason and Religion would not do, make use of the Power he had over his *Tenants* and *Dependants*, not allowing them to commence Suits for Redress, till they had first complained to him, and seen what Redress he could make them.

In sum, he was a well-studied, and improved Christian, able to plead for Virtue and Goodness, with such Reason and Argument, as might become a *Preacher*, and careful to practise it with such exactness, as might adorn a *Cloyster*. He was a Person of very sincere and warm Devotion, a most Religious Honourer of God, and of the Clergy for God's and their Function's sake, an affectionate Admirer of true Virtue and Worth wheresoever he found it, a sincere and zealous Son of the *Church of England*, in whose Communion he lived and died, desiring above all things in his last Extremities, to receive the Holy Sacrament and Priestly Absolution according to its Order and Appointment, and a faithful and serviceable Subject to the King. He was strict in his Trusts, faithful and active in his Friendships, a dutiful

ful Son, a discreet and loving Husband, a good and careful Master to his Servants, and in the inclination of his Mind, and according to the opportunities of his Life, an universal Friend and Benefactor unto all.

This is such an Account, as I thought fit to give you of this Place, of this truly Pious and Exemplary Soul. And I have chose to give it, not so much from general Characters of his Person, as particular Relations of his Practice, both because this is most Honourable to him, there being no way so advantageous of drawing out excellent Persons, as by shewing the Draught which they have made of themselves, their own Praise-worthy Deeds making them more truly Illustrious, than all the Paint and Varnish of abstracted Eloquence; and especially because this is of more use, and a better help to Imitation. For however some Persons may hear general Characters with more Approbation and Applause, as thinking they shew more of Fancy and Wit than plain Narratives of Fact: yet the exposing of their particular Performances, of the Rules they observ'd in governing themselves, and of their wise and worthy Actions, is that which

which is like to gain most Followers, and turns most to Profit in all great Examples. This goes before Men in the way, and marks out the very Steps which they have troden, and so plainly shews and assures the Path to all that have a Mind to follow after them. God grant us all the Grace to imitate these, and other his Virtues after his Death, which we had so just Reason to admire, and bless God for in his Life; and then we need not fear at last to inherit those great Rewards and glorious Promises, which we have reasonable Grounds to believe he is now an happy Sharer of.

11 MA 61

THE

THE
Religious Loyalist :

OR,

A Good Christian taught how to
be a Faithful Servant both to
GOD and the KING.

IN A
VISITATION-SERMON

Preach'd at

Coles-Hill in Warwickshire, Aug. 28. 1685.

At the Triennial Visitation of my Lord's
Grace of *Canterbury*, during the Suspension
of the Bishop of *Litchfield* and *Coventry*.

Religious Loyalty :

O R

A Good Christian taught how to
be a Faithful Servant both to



G O D and the

I N A

VISITATION S E R M O N

French at

Coleridge in Wimpole Street Aug. 28. 1822.
At the Triennial Visitation of my Lord's
Grace of Canterbury, during the suspension
of the Bishop of London and Coventry.

TO THE
READER.

READER,

THE first and greatest Duty in Religion, is sincere Piety towards God. And next to that is Submission to God's Vicegerent, which all Men have Obligation enough to practise, to make their Passage easy, and secure through this World, as well as to save their Souls in that which is to come. To recommend both these Duties to all Mens care, is the business of this Sermon. I have endeavour'd to be Plain and Particular in such necessary Points, to render it more helpful to Mens Practice. And the Plainness and Honesty of this Discourse, together with the great need our Age has to be often admonish'd and instructed in these Subjects, was that, I presume, which mov'd

mov'd several Worthy Persons who were pleas'd with it from the Pulpit, to desire I would make it more publick from the Press. I have yielded to their Request, in hope it can do no hurt, and may do some good. And if thereby any be more instructed or settled in these important Matters, God will receive some Glory, this Church and State some Quiet and Establishment, their own Souls some Benefit by it, and then I have my End.

MATTH.

M A T T H. 22. 21.

*Render therefore unto Caesar, the things
which are Caesar's; and unto God,
the things which are God's.*

THese Words are our Saviour's Answer to a Question which some Male-contented and Religious Zealots among the *Jews* put to him, whether *Tribute was to be paid to the Roman Emperours*, who were the Rulers God had set over them at that time. And they contain the just Bounds of Pious and Religious Loyalty, teaching us how to maintain an inviolable Duty both to *God* and the *King*. Religion towards God is the chief concern of all wise and good Men, especially of us who are the Ministers of it. And Loyalty and due Allegiance to the King, will always be the care of all that duly fear God, or desire to live at quiet. Both these are indispensibly requir'd, and in themselves can very well consist together.

A 2

But

But yet in the practice of the World, Mens Fears for the one, are most apt to bear them against the other. And because we have so fresh an instance of this in the late Rebellion among our selves, I think it may be very fit at this season to shew Men, how they are to express their care for God, and that without Rebelling; and also how they are to shew their affection to their Sovereign, and that without deserting, or any ways injuring true Religion.

Sometimes Princes profess a Wrong Religion; nay, sometimes they set themselves against the True, and persecute God's Servants. And when at any time this is the Case, our Duty to God and the King seem as if they were at odds, and look like irreconcilable and inconsistent things. And then Men oft-times think themselves exempt from one of them, because they cannot serve two Masters of contrary Interests; so that either in Zeal for Religion, they cast off all Duty to their Prince, and turn *Bigotted Rebels*; or else in compliance with their Prince, they throw aside true Religion and their Duty towards God, and turn *Irreligious Time-servers*. But the true determination of the Case, our Saviour tells us, is to do
neither

neither of these. When Princes happen to have any mis-persuasions about Religion, we must still pay them all civil Subjection and Obedience. But our Loyalty must not carry us to embrace their Errors, but at the same time we must keep true to Religion and God's Service. *Render, &c.*

In discoursing upon these words, I shall

1. *Shew on what Ground these Inquirers thought themselves exempt, and what was the cause of this Question.*

2. *Unfold the plain determination our Saviour here gives of it, and shew what is implied in Religious Loyalty and true Christian Subjection, so as that there may be no just cause of Offence, either to God, or to the King. Render, &c.*

1. *I shall shew on what Ground these Inquirers thought themselves exempt, and what was the cause of this Question.*

Now that was, because they thought they ought not to be subject to a Prince of a Foreign Religion.

This Sect, who sought satisfaction in this Point, were not against all Subjection, as if they would be lawless, and introduce a perfect Licence, having no con-

trouler but themselves. They would submit to a Prince of their *own Nation*, as their Fore-fathers had done to *Saul*, *David*, and *Solomon*: Yea, they would submit to a Prince of a *Forreign Nation*, provided he would embrace their Religion and way of Worship, and espouse *Judaism*. And thus these very Inquirers did at this time: For *Herod* was a Forreigner, by Country an *Idumean*, not *Jewish* born; but because *Idumæa*, when it was conquer'd, was cast into the same Province with *Judea*, and especially because he turned Profelyte to *Judaism*, and became an eminent Professor and great Assertor of their Law and Religion, they made no dispute at all of being subject unto him, the *Herodians*, i. e. the Court-Doctors and Favourers of *Herod*, coming along with the *Pharisees* to ask our Lord this Question, as we are told v. 16.

But they were against paying subjection to Heathens, who worshipped other Gods, and were not of the same Religion with themselves. The Sovereign Lord of all is Almighty God, and Princes are only Officers of his whom he has deputed; and they would not esteem any one a right Vicegerent but that worshipped the same God as they did, *μόνον ἡγε-
μεύοντα*

μόνα καὶ δεσπότω τὸν Θεὸν ὑπειλήφασιν, says
 * *Josephus* of them, i. e. *The only Lord and Leader they owned was God*, and Governors that owned him; and so they would not submit to any *prophane* Dominion which had renounced him, as the *Romans* did at that time: So that they cast off the Yoke, not because they would have none over them, but because they would not be subject to a Heathen. The *Founder* of this Sect, which *Josephus* calls the *Fourth Sect*, was *Judas Gaulonites*, who rose in *Galilee* in the days of the *Taxing* under *Cyrenius*, and is called by *Gamaliel Judas of Galilee*, *Act. 5. 37*. He was followed by those *Galileans* whom, because of their rejecting the *Roman Yoke*, *Pilate the Roman Governour* came upon, and slew as they were a Sacrificing, *Luk. 13. 1*. His Followers lay much among the *Pharisees*, those zealous Assertors of the *Mosaic Law* and *Jewish Liberties*, with whom, † as *Josephus* notes, *they accord in all things*. † *Ibid*. And they were *Pharisees who came to Christ*, desiring to be resolved in this Point, v. 15, 16.

Thus did they fantasie they ought not to be subject to the *Roman Emperors*, because they were of *another Religion*: And this being a main Point, and our Blessed

Lord being a Doctor of greatest Name and Reputation among them, they come to him for a confirmation of it. As for other *Rabbies*, they told him they were Temporizers and Court-flatterers, Men of good Understandings, it may be, but of low Spirits; who altho' they had the wit to see this Truth, had yet the corrupt carnal Policy to conceal and dissemble it, because it was dangerous; especially having so fresh an instance of the *Roman* Severity on the Abettors of it, as *Pilate's* slaughter of the *Galileans*. But as for himself, they believed him to be not only skilful, but true and bold too, and that in his Answers he would speak the Truth of things, not what was like to please Persons. And therefore in this case they would not apply themselves to others, from whom they could look for nothing but Art and Secular Compliances, but to him, from whom they had so just reason to expect the Truth it self. *Master, say they, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man, for thou regardest not the persons of men. Tell us therefore what thinkest thou, Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? V. 16, 17.*

This

This Opinion then was the occasion of this Question. I proceed now

2. *To unfold the plain determination, which our Saviour gives of it, and to shew what is implied in Religious Loyalty and true Christian Subjection, so as that there may be no just cause of offence, either to God, or the King. Render, &c.*

Now this determination consists in these two things.

1. That we pay all due Respect and just Obedience to our Prince, whatever Religion he be of; so that *the Pretence of Religion must never make us ill Subjects. Render unto Caesar, the things which are Caesar's.* But still

2. That at the same time we reserve all due service, and subjection to Almighty God; so that when Princes happen to err in Religion, *the pretence of Loyalty must never draw us to embrace their Errors, and become irreligious. Render unto God, the things which are God's.*

1. He tells us we must pay all due Respect and just Obedience to our Prince, whatever Religion he be of; so that *the Pretence of Religion must never make us ill Subjects. Render unto Caesar, &c.*

Now the *things of Caesar*, or those Duties which we are to pay our Prince,

I shall comprehend under these *three* Heads.

1. *Inward Love and Reverence.*
2. *Respectful Speeches and Expressions.*
3. *Obedient and Submissive Practice.*

1. To a Prince all Subjects are bound to pay *inward Love and Reverence.*

They must bear an inward Love and Kindness, and stand well affected to their *Power and Persons.* And the natural Effect of this will be, that they wish well to them, and sincerely desire the Ease and Happiness of their Reign: That they endeavour to accomplish their own Desires, and make their Reigns easy by their Quietness, and dutiful Behaviour towards them: That they be forward to observe their Virtues, and to commend what is good in them, for that shews Affection: That they be prone to conceal, or extenuate what would bring them to shame, for that is true love and tenderness towards any person: That they be candid in construing what is done or said by them, and turn all, so far as things will reasonably bear, to such a sence, as may cherish and maintain a good opinion of them, and the like. These are real Fruits of Love, and proper Trials of our Kindness

ness towards any person; and therefore are the true Effects, and surest Signs of our being well affected towards them.

They must also pay them an *inward Reverence*, because of their *Power and Pre-eminence*. *Render fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour*, says St. Paul, speaking of the Dues of Kings, *Rom. 13. 7*. And this Reverence we shall be thought to show, when we do not pragmatically intrude our selves into their Affairs, but by letting them alone to their own care, shew, we think them fit to manage their own business. When we pay a modest deference to their Councils, which we have neither Opportunity, nor Skill to judge of, and which therefore we cannot Censure, without great Arrogance and Sauciness. And lastly, when we behave our selves in their Presence after a respectful sort, not with slightful and contemptuous Deportment, but with such becoming Care, as manifests an Awe for them dwelling upon our Spirits.

2. To a Prince all Subjects are bound to pay *respectful Speeches and Expressions*. They must not use blunt Reproofs and unmannerly Rudeness, when at any time they are addressing to themselves. *Is it fit*, says Elishu in Job, *to say to a King, Thou art*

art wicked? and to Princes, You are ungodly?
 Job 34. 18. Nor must they use irreverent and reproachful Speech when at any time they discourse of them with others. This implies *two* things; One is, *that they do not speak evil of their Persons*, being forward to tax, and aggravate their Faults: The other is, *that they do not complain and envy against their Administrations*, delighting to lay out the Grievances of State, and misguidance of Affairs. Both these were the Sins of the *Gnosticks*, who brought the greatest scandal upon our Religion in the *first* days. They were always finding fault, as St. Jude says, *with the publick Managements*, being *Murmurers and Complainers*, v. 16. and boldly vilifying and reproaching the *Persons* of their Governours: *They despise Dominions*, says he, *and speak evil of Dignities*. Whereas *Mickael the Arch-Angel*, when he contended with the Devil himself about the body of Moses, *durst not bring against him a railing Accusation*, but said, *The Lord rebuke thee*; treating Authority with decent Speech, even when it was lodged in the Prince of Darkness, v. 8, 9.

Thus must all good Subjects refrain from speaking Evil of the Persons of their Governours, and inveighing against the pub-

publick Grievances and Male-administration of Affairs. And this they are bound to do, not as if the *Persons* and *Conduct* of all Rulers were so right, that no fault could be found in them; for there will be Personal Faults, and Publick Miscarriages so long as Governours are Men: But because when there are things blame-worthy, in Charity to their Persons, and dutiful Regard to their Power, we must not speak evil of them, and inveigh against them for them. When *St. Paul* called *Ananias whited Wall*, it was a true Reproach, for he had deserv'd that Name by his hypocritical and unjust Usage. But tho' the Reflection was true, yet he confesses it was Criminal; because *it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of thy people, Acts 23. 3, 5.*

3. To their Governours all Subjects are bound to pay *an obedient and submissive Practice*. Under this I comprehend three things. 1. *That they pay faithfully all legal Tributes.* 2. *That they obey readily all their just Laws.* And 3. *that when they cannot obey, they suffer patiently without making Insurrections.*

1. *They must pay faithfully all legal Tributes*, which are imposed on them by their Country Laws and Authentick Customs;

stoms; and which are as much the Prince's Property, not to be with-held, or defalcated, without Fraud and Dishonesty, as every private Man's Estate and Inheritance is his. *Render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom is due, saith St. Paul, Rom. 13. 7.* This the *Primitive Christians* did with exemplary fidelity and exactness, being as Conscientiously fearful to with-hold any just Payment from their Prince, as from their Neighbours. They durst not pay, indeed, what was exacted of them for *Idolatrous Uses*, because that had been to contribute towards the Worship and Service of Idols. But *Cetera Vectigalia Gratias Christianis agent, &c.* says *Tertulian*, i. e. *As to all other Customs, which are every-where fraudulently conceal'd or with-held by the Gentiles, we Christians are so strict in paying them, that tho' the Gentiles pay Taxes for Idolatrous uses, which the Religion of us Christians will not suffer us to do, yet our punctualness in discharging all State-taxes so far exceeds theirs, that we pay as much into the Checquer for civil Impositions, as the Heathens do for those, and for Idolatrous too, Tert. Apol. c. 42.*

2. They must readily obey all their just Laws. Put them in mind to be subject to
Princi-

Principalities and Powers, says St. Paul, and to obey Magistrates, Tit. 3. 1. And this Obedience is due, whensoever they command *Lawful* things; i. e. *things unforbidden by a higher Power*, and which have no Law of God against them. To shew a thing *Lawful*, it is unreasonable to ask where there is a *Command* in Scripture, and a Law of God for it: For such a Law commanding it, would not make it a thing *Lawful* which may be done, but a thing *Necessary* which must be done, and cannot be let alone. But to the Lawfulness of things, it is enough that God has said nothing of them, and that there be no Law of his against them. This is security enough that they may be done without sin, or any offence to him: For he is never offended, and we never sin, nor shall ever suffer, but for breaking some Law, and doing something that he has forbidden. *Whosoever committeth sin, transgresses a Law*, saith St. John, for sin is the transgression of a Law, 1 Joh. 3. 4. And there must always be a Law, saith St. Paul, that worketh wrath; for where there is no Law, there is no Transgression, Rom. 4. 15. So that whensoever they enjoyn *unforbidden* things, they enjoyn *Lawful* ones, which no good Subjects must

must dispute and question, but peaceably and readily perform.

3. *When unlawful things are enjoyn'd, which they cannot honestly obey, they must suffer with Patience, and not seek to stave off Sufferings by making Insurrections.* Whilst there is any help in Law to prevent unjust Sufferings, Men may claim their *Legal Privileges* in their own defence, as
 * Acts 22. St. * Paul did before the *Heathen Magi-*
 25. & c. *strates.* Or if Laws give no redress, they
 16. 37. may have recourse to *Prayers and Tears*, or any other peaceable Arts to still a Prince's Rage, and melt him into Justice: But if all peaceable Methods fail, and there appear no hope of Protection but in *Force*, the Case is helpless in Humane means, and must be left to God to redress it. Rebellion is a thing, which no Necessity can excuse, nor any Pretence can authorize: *They that resist*, says St. Paul, *shall receive to themselves damnation*, Rom. 13. 2. Which was spoken, when the Christians had felt some, and daily feared and expected greater Sufferings; and bound up their hands, when the Scepter presently after was sway'd by a Man, Nero I mean, who invaded honest Mens Estates to supply his own Profuseness, and embro'd his Hands
 in

in the Blood of any he had a Pique against, without any regard to Law or Justice; and was a profess'd Enemy of the true God, and rais'd the first Persecution against the Christians, as appears from * *Tacitus* and *Suetonius*, two ap-
 prov'd Historians of those times: And these are the fairest Pretences, that can ever be urg'd in this Case; so that if they cannot secure us in flying to Arms against our Governours, nothing else can.

* Tacit.
 Annal. 15.
 & Suet. in
 Vita Ner.

All these are *the things of Caesar*: and whether Princes are good or bad, they are all due to them. For the ground of their being due, is not the *moral Endowments* of Princes, because they are Men well qualified; but their *Power and Authority*, because they are the Vicegerents and Ordinance of God. This God assigns as the reason of our Duty; not that a Prince is Circumspect or Successful, Wise or Holy, but that he is his Deputy. *I have given the Kingdom to Nebuchadnezzar*, says he, *wherefore all Nations must serve him*, Jer. 27. 6, 7, 8. *The Powers are ordain'd of God, therefore he that resisteth shall receive damnation*, Rom. 13. 1, 2. and *he is the Minister of God, wherefore you must needs be subject*, v. 4, 5. *Inde Poteſtas*

Potestas Casari unde Spiritas, illuc suspicientes Christiani, &c. It is because God that gave him Breath has vested him with Power, that we honour and obey the Emperour, says *Tertullian*, *Apol. c. 30, 31.* So that all this Love and Reverence, this respectful Speech and submissive Practice are due, as to the Best, so to the Worst of Princes. They must be paid, not only where Kings Rule well, and are wisely solicitous for the Publick; but also where they lie steeped in Pleasure, and hate Business, and not only neglect, but oppress the State. They are due to Princes of the most opposite Religions: for this is the very Case determin'd in the Text; the *Jews* denying Tribute, as was said, to the *Roman Emperours*, because they were Heathens. Nay, they are due, not only to Princes that profess a false Religion, but also to those who impose it, and persecute the true Religion. For so *Nero* did, if not before; yet at least, soon after *St. Paul*, under the pain of *Damnation*, had requir'd all Christians to be subject, *Rom. 13.* And so also did the other persecuting Emperours that succeeded him, when the Christians were a noble spectacle of Bleeding, but persevering and unconquerable Loyalty to all the World.

As

As for this Tryal of Persecutions, God be thanked it is not our Case: For our Laws protect the True Religion, and punish all that dissent from it. And our King has graciously assur'd us, that he will govern by Laws, yea preserve the Government and Laws themselves, both in Church and State, as they are now establish'd.

But where that is truly the Case, as it was with the Christians in the *Apostles* days, and the *Primitive Persecutions*; and as it is still with the *Forreign Protestants* in Popish Countries, but especially in *France*. Yet will not this Persecution of the True Religion, exempt Subjects from any Branch of the foresaid Duties. They must bear Honour and Reverence, and speak of them with Respect, as well as with Truth and Justice, and pay faithfully all Legal Tributes, and obey cheerfully all their just Laws, and live quietly under them, without raising any Commotions to defend and secure even their Religion and themselves, under all Princes, under a *Nero*, *Dioclesian*, or *Julian*; that not only profess, but espouse and forcibly propagate a False Religion, as well as under the best and most Orthodox and Christian Kings. So that

the Pretence of Religion can never authorize any Men to be ill Subjects. Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, says our Saviour in this very Case, to those who inquir'd how they should behave themselves under Princes of a wrong Religion.

But whilst we are thus careful to pay all due Respect, and just Obedience to our Prince, whatever Religion he be of, so that *the Pretence of Religion never make us ill Subjects.* We must take care still further,

2. To reserve at the same time all due Service and Subjection to Almighty God ; so that when at any time Princes happen to err in Religion, the *Pretence of Loyalty must never draw us to embrace their Errours, and become irreligious.* When we do any thing else in compliance with Sovereign Princes, yet must we not sin against God for their sakes : For Princes, how high soever they are above us, are yet under him as his mere *Deputies* and * *Ministers*, and he is still the Sovereign Prince ; so that our respect to them must never carry us to his prejudice, *Render unto God the things which are God's,* is the other part of our Saviour's Answer in this case.

* Rom. 13.
4.

The

The *things of God* are the *things of Religion*. And the Religion, which God prescribes, is not always the same with that which the Prince doth. In our own case, God be thanked, they meet. For our Laws fetch Religion from the Scriptures, and establish the same that Christ himself has there establish'd. And our King has given us his Royal Word, that he will govern by Laws, and maintain them, and *always defend and support the Church of England*. But in other places among our neighbour Nations, the Laws of Religion, and the Laws of the Land, thwart and oppose each other. And so they did when our Religion was first planted, in the days of the *Apostles*; and so they continued to do in the succeeding Ages, and may still happen to do in all times. But when that is the case, this close adherence to the Rules of True Religion is still the inviolable Right of God, and no Powers on Earth must ever drive us from them.

Now the *things of God*, or those things which are due to him in Religion, I shall reduce to these *three Heads*.

1. *A Belief of his Revelations.*
2. *Worshipping him according to his own Rules.*
3. *The service of a good Life, and an upright Practice.*

1. The first thing of Religion due to God, is *a belief of his Revelations*. Whatsoever he declares, we must all give absolute credit to; because all that believe a God, believe he is infinitely true, and can never deceive Men. Nay, in matters of *Religion and Salvation* we must give credit to him alone, because he only knows the terms of his own Mercy, and how he will bring us all to Heaven. In *these* Points, we are not to believe an *Apostle* himself, if he should not speak

* 2 Cor. 1. from him: For they, as St. * *Paul* said, had not dominion over mens Faith, to make them believe any thing; but were only

† 1 Cor. 4. as *Messengers* and † *Dispensers of God's* Word, and so could declare nothing but what he had told them. And much less should we believe either *him* or an *Angel from Heaven*, if he should not only speak to us without Book, but against it, and contradict God's own Revelation: *Tho' an Angel from Heaven preach any*

any other Gospel than what we have preached unto you, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω, let him be accursed; i. e. look on him as if he were anathematiz'd, and come not near him, nor give any heed to him, more than you would to one that is thrown out among Heathens, and publickly excommunicated, Gal. 1. 8. So that if the Laws of any Country require Men to give their assent to *ridiculous* and *absurd* Opinions, as they do among *Heathens* and *Mahometans*; or to believe quite *contrary* to the *Scriptures*, as they do in *Italy* and *France*, where all Men are compell'd to believe *Transubstantiation*, and to profess a Church *Infallible*, which has evidently *embrac'd* and *taught* a number of *Falshoods*: they not only *need not*, but they *ought not* to comply with them. They must trust God before any Princes on Earth, when they happen to contradict him. It is God's Prerogative to govern our Faith, and that must not be given up to any others.

2. A *second* thing in Religion due to God, is *Worshipping him according to his own Rules*. This is another of God's Rights. For his *adorable Excellencies*, and *Sovereignty over us*, claim our Worship; and he himself alone can prescribe it.

The end of it is to honour and please him ; and what will do that, is best known to himself ; so that his Worship must be of his own prescribing, and we must never attempt to worship him in a way forbidden. And therefore if any Powers on Earth should command us to worship God in a way contrary to what he has required, therein they are not to be obey'd. Thus the *Heathens* requir'd the *Primitive Christians* to *Sacrifice to their Gods*, and to *Swear by the Emperour's Genius*. And thus in *France*, and in other *Popish Countries*, the poor *Protestants* are requir'd, among other things of like sort, to *pray to Saints*, and *adore Images*, and *worship the Host*, and *take up with a maimed Sacrament*, receiving the *Bread* only without the *Cup*, and *address to God in a Latine Service* which they do not understand, and from whence they can expect to reap no profit. All these ways of Worship are directly opposite and contradictory to God's Rules ; and therefore were justly and necessarily rejected by God's faithful Servants. For here, notwithstanding their Prince's Command, they might and ought to reserve themselves to Almighty God, this being his Province.

3. A third thing of Religion due to God, is *the Service of a good Life, and an upright Practice.* This is what God indispensibly requires of Men in all Religions, and which they must be most careful to pay to him inviolably in all times. So that if any Powers should require to be serv'd by *Fraud or Falshood, by Rapine or Bloodshed*, if they would have Men stop at no Bounds, nor scruple at any Wickedness which serves their ends; their Subjects or Dependants must not hearken, but here obey God, who is a greater King than they.

These are the *things of Religion*; and these are reserv'd to God as his things, which are put without the controul of Princes; so that we must not comply when at any time they invade them. Thus the *three Children* would not worship the *Golden Image*, for all the strictness of the *King's Commandment*, Dan. 3. 4, 15, 16, 18. and *Daniel* would not omit his daily Prayers to God, notwithstanding thereby at his utmost peril, he broke *Darius's Royal Edict*, Dan. 6. 7, ad 10. And when Christ had commanded the Apostles * to go and preach to all Nations, * Matt. 28. they would not desist when the *Jews* forbade it, saying, *Whether it be right in the*

sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, Acts 4. 17, 18, 19. And the *Primitive Christians*, those renowned Patterns of Loyalty, tho' they would never raise Rebellions against their Princes, yet stood out in a continual and invincible Breach of their wicked Laws, refusing obstinately either to *Curse Christ*, or to *Sacrifice to Idols*, when they were requir'd thereto by their Heathen Governours. When any King's Laws run thus against God's Laws, non-compliance and holding out is a grace; which the more resolv'd it is, the better it is. Nay, that *Boldness* and *undaunted Face* in opposition, which in case of lawful Impositions, is a most *criminal Impudence*, is in this case a *peculiar Gift of the Holy Ghost*, which was begg'd by the *Apostles* when under the Threatnings of the *Jewish Rulers*, they desir'd *Grace to speak the word with boldness*, Acts 4. 29. which, according to that Prayer, was afterwards most eminent in *themselves* and the *Primitive Confessors*; which God still bestow'd when he call'd Men to suffer for him in *after-Ages*: and which I doubt not but he will still bestow when he shall please to call any Churches to suffer for him, to the end of the World. Thus

Thus are the things of Religion God's things, wherein all Men are still to follow him, tho' the Powers of the World being erroneously mis-led, should have the misfortune both to practise themselves, and to injoyn their Subjects too to practise otherwise.

The only Caution I think fit to be added in this Case is, *That we do not make those things Religion which are not so, as not Kneeling at the Communion, not using the Cross in Baptism, not joyning in a Form of Prayers, and the like.* True Religion doth not stick at these and such like indifferent things: For God makes Religion, and he has no where forbid the use of them, but may be serv'd by them as *truly*, and oft-times more *becomingly* than without them. So that when our Governours require only such things as these, they intrench not at all upon Religion and the Rights of God, but we may lawfully obey them, and then we must do it. If they command against him, in that we are to desert them, because we are to follow him in Religion. But then we must take care, that what we call Religion be not a point of Man's Invention, that it be some Article of the Holy Scriptures, and not of our own Fancy,

Fancy, something which is a Religion of God's, and not of our own making.

Thus must we hold firm to God in things of Religion; and therefore *as the pretence of Religion must never lead any to be ill Subjects: So neither, when Princes happen to be mis-led in Religion, must the pretence of Loyalty ever draw them to err and be ill Christians.* When Subjects are most Loyal to their Prince, in paying him all Honour, and Obedience, and submissive Carriage, they must not embrace his Errours, nor conform to his Opinion and Practice in Religion, if they happen to be different from what the Scripture teaches. This is no Act of Disloyalty to a Prince, to be true to Almighty God, and both to *believe and practise* as he would have us. All Loyalty to the King must consist with True Religion towards God, since the King is only God's Vicegerent. This was the Belief of our *Saviour Christ*, and of his *Apostles*, and of all the *Saints and Servants of God in all Ages.* And it will always be the Opinion of every Man, whose Conscience is not debauch'd with Atheistical Principles, but knows he has a God as well as a King to serve.

Having

Having thus stated what are the *things of God*, and what the *things of Caesar*, and shown how the pretended Care and Zeal for the one can never exempt us from the other ; I shall now very briefly exhort you to a careful Observance of what has been deliver'd, and so conclude.

Since God and the King then must both have what belongs to them ; and God, who is most jealous of his own Honour, will not have Mens Zeal, even for that to transport them against the just Rights of *Caesar* ; let me exhort all that hear me to have a watchful Eye to both these, and that what God has put together, they would not set asunder. Be careful to give God all the Honour that is due to him, and to do it with Constancy, Zeal, and Affection. But when you are most zealous for the Honour of God, be careful to preserve an inviolable Duty to your Prince too, who is *God's Vicegerent*. Shew your selves hearty and steady *Protestants*, that is God's Cause, wherein you may and should be zealous ; but at the same time be sure to shew your selves *good Subjects* and *good Christians*. Let not your Zeal for Protestancy bereave you of your Loyalty or
Chri-

Christianity, and make you forget either your Duty to your Governours, or that Charity which you owe your Neighbours ; even those who are most opposite in Religion to your selves. This is to act by a Primitive Spirit like sincere Servants of Christ, and true Members of the *Church of England* ; to whose Eternal Honour it may be said, that the Clergy, and true Members of it, beyond what is ordinary in other Churches, are careful to shew such a just and well-govern'd Zeal for Almighty God, as dare not fly in the Face of the King, or be unchristianly violent against their Brethren for God's sake. They are, and by their Principles should be zealous against Popery. But at the same time they are zealous against Rebellion and Disloyalty, one of the most mischievous things in Popery, and against all unchristian Usage, and uncharitableness to Men of different Persuasions, which the unbridled Zeal of Papists and Sectaries too commonly transports them to.

And then, as for you, my *Reverend Brethren*, who are intrusted with the Ministry of Religion, let me particularly recommend the things of God and Religion to your care, that you would labour

labour to make Men true to God; that they may be true to the King for God's sake. Stir them up, not only to like Religion, or to be *Luke-warm*, which God * told *the Church of Laodicea* was * *Rev. 3. loathsome*; but to be concern'd, and zealous in it. ^{16,} And that they may not be all Heat without Light, nor their Zeal out-run their Knowledge; endeavour to possess them with right Notions of it, letting them see that Religion lies in *Faith and Practice*, in *Believing all the Articles of the Creed*, and *Keeping the Commandments and Laws of God*. Suffer them not to place *Religion* in little things, to embrace Shadows for a Substance, and to think either to please or displease God by such frivolous and inconsiderable things, as are unworthy of any Wise Man's Notice; which needless Scrupulosity of Mind, will not only prove a Snare to themselves, but inevitably render them troublesome to their Governours, and very detrimental to the Publick Peace. And when they are thus rightly instructed in *Religion*, and made true to Almighty God; be diligent to weed out all Seditious Principles, to make Civil Subjection as necessary a part of their *Religion*, and as much a
Point

Point of Conscience, as Prayers and God's immediate Service. In a word, to let them see the Necessity, the Duty, and the Benefit of being inviolably Loyal and True to the King too.

I know the Judgments of great Numbers are prepossess'd on the wrong side, and leaven'd with ill Principles, instill'd by cunning Seducers into many well-meaning, but unwary Minds, both about the Things of God, and of the King too. For as for the Things of the King, through an habitual and indulg'd Licence, many are come without Regret to question any thing that is in favour of their Governours; to put remote and imaginary Cases, in Bar of present, real, and unquestionable Duties; to Cavil and Dispute Power, when they should be shewing Obedience; nay, to avow such Principles as inevitably unsettle any State, and authorize the most bare-fac'd Rebellions, as, God knows, we have newly felt by sad Experience; which would have been much sadder still, had not the Wisdom and Goodness of God confounded the Craft, and defeated the mischievousness of Men, in our late happy, speedy, and, in appearance, intire Deliverance from them.

And

And then as for Religion, great Numbers of those who are concern'd for it, either place it in trifling Truths, or in groundless and untrue Opinions; and where they are most mistaken, they are usually most confident and concern'd, and shew more Zeal for those empty and unprofitable Nothings where they think wrong, than for all the grand and important Truths of their Religion where they believe right. These ill Weeds have in too many marr'd the Soil which I am entreating you to cultivate. And what pains it may have cost others to sow these evil Seeds, and give them root, I know not: But now they are in possession, and are riveted in the Minds of Men, I know it will cost you much Pains and Patience too, to pluck them out. But this, my Reverend Brethren, tho' it will exercise your Care, yet must not discourage it. Let not us shew less diligence to cure Mens Minds, than others have done to corrupt them. Let not the Goodness of our Cause suffer through our Remisness, and want of care in managing it. Substantial Religion and Loyalty are true and mighty, and will prevail at last. But without your care and pains, who
are

are appointed Advocates for them, and are of all Men, as most concern'd, so best fitted to uphold them, they will not be prevalent. May the Almighty God daily increase your Zeal, and both direct your Labours, and prosper them in so good a Work: That you may not only be rewarded for the honesty of your Endeavours, when Jesus Christ *the chief Shepherd*, and *Bishop* of the Church, as St. Peter * styles him, shall come at last; but may at present see the Fruit, and rejoyce in the Success of them too. *Amen.*

* 1 Pet. 5. 4.
& 1 Pet. 2.
25.

II MA 61

F I N I S.

P
o
l
y